THE MASTERY OF FEAR

WILLIAM S. WALSH

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BY

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AUTHOR OF "YOURS FOR SLEEP," ETC.

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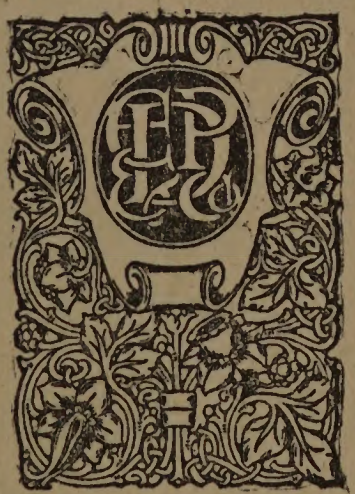

NEW YORK

E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY

681 FIFTH AVENUE

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122997

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PREFACE

FEAR, when normal, is necessary and beneficial; when abnormal, it is needless and a detriment. Just how prevalent abnormal fear is, no one knows; it is probably true that the vast majority have, to some extent, fears which may be classified as pathological. It is apparent to physicians that a large percentage of their patients are victims more of fear than of the ailments for which relief is sought; some physicians go so far as to state that fear is the chief source of suffering, and of such disorders as are loosely called nervous. To those who have come into contact with large numbers of the discontented, the misfits of various kinds, it would appear that more unhappiness, more business and social failure are due to fear than to any other cause.

Considering the above, it is reasonable to assume that a book on fear would have a field of usefulness. This volume represents an effort to deal with the subject in a manner suitable for the general reader. Technicalities have been avoided; and, as far as the subject allows, the work has been made practical.

Unfortunately, there is no specific cure for abnormal fear in general, especially a literary prescription. Nor is it possible to cover in a moderate-sized volume all the various fears. There are any number of abnormal fears, each of which has peculiarities depending upon its host. It is only theorists and others who have little or no clinical knowledge of abnormal fear who offer, as panaceas, platitudes, philosophy, deep breathing, day-by-day and similar formulas, and so on. Such methods may be of limited utility in mild, transient fears, but they do a person who has a well-established fear as much good as would a bread pill. This is because they do not seek to understand the individual, nor the basic reasons for his fear. Before a marked abnormal fear can be routed, it is usually necessary to know these facts; knowing them, the way out is apparent, and comparatively simple.

To overcome as far as possible the limitations placed upon a book of this nature, the writer has taken up in the earlier chapters various aspects of normal and abnormal fear, together with such practical conclusions as may be drawn from the discussion. The greater part of the book deals with common fears about which one can be more dogmatical and help-

ful, and about which there is much need of enlightenment.

It remains to be stated that some types of morbid fear are open to various interpretations according to the school of medical psychology which one follows. For example, the viewpoint of a psychoanalyst would not always agree with that of one who did not accept Freud's teachings. The present writer has not held to any school of thought entirely, though he has endeavored, bearing in mind the book's intended purpose and public, to present the facts as they seem to be.

W. S. W.

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THE MASTERY OF FEAR

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CHAPTER I

FEAR IN GENERAL

Nature and Extent of Fear—Usefulness of Fear—Abnormal Fear—Varieties of Abnormal Fear

1

FEAR has always attracted scientific study. Some investigators have sought to trace its natural history; others have endeavored to ascertain whether it is aroused by mental or physical incitants, or both; others have described its physiological and pathological manifestations; still others have labored to find measures by which it may be overcome. These researches have been of considerable practical importance and interest to all of us, not only because morbid fear is very prevalent and very distressing, but also because it has been, in the past at least, very difficult to correct.

With the purely academic or technical aspects of fear we shall not concern ourselves.

It is sufficient for our purposes to recall that fear is a feeling generated by the anticipation of pain, using the term pain broadly so as to include mental as well as physical suffering. It is one of the oldest, strongest, and most troublesome of the emotions, and one of the first to appear; in fact, it is primitive, a matter of racial inheritance, and can be elicited shortly after birth. Its innate nature is well-shown in the fears which precede experience, as in the infant's fear of losing its physical support (of falling), and of loud sounds. It is often said that infants and children naturally fear the dark, the unfamiliar, the big, the little, animals, strangers, furry objects; but we have reason to believe that these fears are acquired by experience, accident, suggestion, education, imagination. At any rate, the experiments of Watson and Watson [1] apparently indicate that the fear of falling and the fear of loud sounds are the only fears fundamental in healthy babies.

Fear is universal, and common to all creatures; it can be demonstrated in insects and in still lower orders of life. Even the lion, the king of beasts, and the symbol of strength

[1] "Studies in Infant Psychology," in *The Scientific Monthly*, Dec., 1921.

and courage, displays it; it is fear which causes the powerful eagle to build its nest at the top of a mountain or the tallest tree. We often refer to fearless persons and animals, but this is merely a figure of speech, not a fact; every living thing fears something or other. It is true that, in a few instances, creatures have been found that apparently did not know what fear was; for example, penguins discovered near the South Pole by Sir Ernest Shackleton had been so free of enemies of all kinds over many generations that they permitted men and horses to go among them, and allowed themselves to be handled, without the least concern. However, when other men arrived later, who clubbed and shot them, their fear instinct became active, which goes to show that their fear was only dormant, not really absent. The disposition to fear is not, of course, equally distributed, either among species or individuals of a species, and some are more adept in concealing fear; but under suitable conditions the bravest will reveal their own particular fear, just as the most timid will expose their own form of courage.

2

Since fear is so widespread, it is reasonable to assume that it has, or had in the beginning,

some useful purpose. But it would appear that there are very many of us who look upon it as more hurtful than helpful, and who believe that every effort should be made to stamp it out entirely. Extremes are, in most things, very undesirable and harmful; and while it will be conceded that fear is too much in evidence and too much of a handicap, the state of insufficient fear has its serious disadvantages. As numerous writers have shown, such animals and human beings as possess fear to least degree, and who must undergo pain before learning to fear certain objects and situations, are usually the physical and mental inferiors of those in whom the fear-capacity is reasonably well-developed; again, their span of life is short. A little thought should convince us that were it not for fear we should be constantly exposed to suffering and destruction. Fear of famine prompts us to build granaries; fear of fire causes us to provide men and appliances to cope with it; fear of poverty leads us to practice thrift. The majority of us, probably, like to think that we live aright solely because of love of right, and that in matters other than ethics we do as we please, yet there is no one who has not been, and who is not now deterred from certain courses, solely by fear, say by fear of

his God, of discovery, of dishonor, of public reproach. And, as the Boston police strike emphasized, it is well for those who are good citizens and who wish to escape assault, robbery, destruction of property, rape, and other evils, that there exists such a thing as fear of the law.

Fear is, then, useful and necessary. It is perfectly natural; it can not be removed from life, nor is it wise to attempt to do so, though there is great need of our learning what to fear and how to fear. Were our future citizens to be brought up wholly unacquainted with fear, if such were possible, recklessness would rule, and individual and national safety and prosperity would be jeopardized. The best citizen is not he who scoffs at law, ethics, the opinions of his neighbors, but he who values them and conducts himself accordingly. The happy and progressive nation is not the one which believes itself secure from aggression, which is overconfident of its fighting qualities, and which, therefore, maintains no adequate martial forces, but the one which is ever mindful of possible dangers and temperately prepares against them. To repeat, fear makes it possible for us to live and to enjoy; not only this, to it we are indebted for much of the progress made, and still

being made, in agriculture, astronomy, religion, medicine, industry, and in other fields. Truly, fear is the beginning of wisdom.

3

While fear is useful, it is so only when held within its proper confines. This leads us to consider the conditions under which fear is abnormal.

Associated with the emotion of fear is the instinct of flight. Biologically, fear was intended to rouse this instinct and to prepare the organism so that flight might be facilitated. Consequently, fear is abnormal when, flight being necessary, it is so intense as to impede flight, when it is uncontrollable. Intense fear excites body and mind unduly—the heart beats wildly, the breathing is labored, the limbs are tremulous, as if paralysed, and are no longer under the control of the will; consciousness is clouded; the attention is riveted upon the object causing the fear, so that the intellectual processes required in estimating the degree of danger and the means of escape can not be utilized. Popularly speaking, it roots one to the ground, causes a person to lose his head, to become terror-stricken; and even though there may occur no loss of consciousness and of

muscle power which bar flight, the person's actions are methodless and futile. Obviously, these responses serve no good purpose; indeed, they favor one's destruction.

In very early times life was practically a constant warfare of one living thing against the other. To fear often was natural, and to run away necessary. And when primitive man became afraid he ran and hid himself, so that eventually fear and flight, as well as the physiological changes which accompany fear, became closely interrelated, so much so that fear alone would produce these changes in anticipation of flight. In early days, too, there were many mysterious occurrences in the heavens, in the air, in the sea, in the land; and if prehistoric man dreaded them greatly, and sought to hide himself from them, he was to be excused. But, as biology shows, time has changed that. Huge animals no longer abound; wild beasts do not attack us suddenly; venomous serpents do not infest the highways; marauding and cannibalistic tribes do not pounce upon us, strip us of our possessions, cast us into slavery or worse. We are protected from storms; we have laws and guardians to shield us from unprovoked assault; we are acquainted with comets, eclipses, and similar phenomena; in short, there is not

much need of running away today, and, therefore, there is little need of fear, especially of marked fear and frequent fear. True, we still have enemies, the struggle for existence still goes on; but such enemies as we encounter in every-day life must be faced; they are not done away with nor conquered by running away or hiding. Nor do they make violent and purposeful assaults upon us. Our human enemies, for example, attack us as a rule only in so far as, by improving their working ability, they seek to further their own comfort and progress, thereby leaving us on the lower rounds of the business and social ladder, and exposing us to such inanimate enemies as hunger, cold, poverty, denials of various kinds. And in the endeavor to outstrip us they do not employ clubs, stone axes, arrows, rocks, fists; but intellect, forethought, industry. If we are to keep up with them we must use the same weapons. If we give way to or have frequent attacks of unjustified fear we lose out, not only because the positions which lead to fame, power, fortune, are open only to the confident, the aggressive, the poiseful, but also because fear saps away our physical and mental strength and endurance. And should it be that we have jealous rivals, the latter are likely to take advantage

of our betrayals of fear and want of courage; for since primitive days it has been a favorite mode to attack a person, or to drive him away from a prize, by inciting in him fear, shock, discomfiture, discouragement.

Fear is naturally a transient state, the effects of which soon wear off. Should it become persistent or chronic it is, therefore, morbid. As stated, the present-day excuses for fear are comparatively few. We are, of course, open to many possible dangers, such as accident, illness, loss of position, but while these evils should receive a certain amount of thought, they should not be in consciousness constantly. Their proper habitat is in the mind's background, in the foreconscious or subsconscious region, and should enter consciousness only occasionally, when the circumstances actually warrant. For the most part, they should be dormant, should operate automatically, and should promote such desirable habits as caution when crossing a crowded thoroughfare, personal hygiene, thrift, industry. The various ideas which are associated with danger are certainly out of place as continual usurpers of attention; as such they produce anxieties and actions which are not at all beneficial. For instance, when the idea of ill health is in mind

excessively, the person usually is greatly concerned about his physical welfare, broods about all known ailments, and takes precautions which border on fanaticism. Similarly, he who dwells upon other potential evils tends to be apprehensive always, to be intimidated by numerous, possible sufferings which he projects into the present, and to embark upon supposedly preventive courses, which, if they do not seriously interfere with his social and his business success, are, at least, unnecessary and inimical to his peace of mind.

Another criterion is the rationality of the fear. A rational or logical fear is, in brief, one which is adjusted to the nature and to the amount of the possible injury. It has a sufficient, known cause, a helpful purpose, and is shared by most people. When we examine the fears which trouble a great many persons we find few that are rational: they are without a known cause or the cause is insufficient; they produce reactions out of proportion to their incitants; they are purposeless, harmful, marked accentuations of normally mild fears; they are not justified by the experience of the present day. We have examples in the fear that heavenly bodies will fall; in the fear of being alone; in the fear of inanimate objects, as trees, tele-

phones, mirrors, etc. Such fears are, of course, unreasonable, useless, and inexcusable. They are, it must be admitted, often caused by factors which exempt the affected person from full blame, yet they are both preventable and controllable, how, we shall learn later on.

4

There are other methods by which the abnormality of fear may be gauged. We have referred to the chief points however. Our next interest is the direction which morbid fear may take.

In many cases of abnormal fear the fear is without a reason or object at first. One is afraid, and exhibits fear's manifestations, but without knowing why; one may even believe the attack to be baseless. Usually, fear attaches itself to something, often to many objects, so that its alleged cause is shifted from one thing to another. A cause is assigned by the individual because it is against human nature to lack an explanation for any given phenomenon, even though the explanation is not entirely satisfactory; again, the person may prefer to name a certain cause for the reason that the true cause, which he may suspect, is not agreeable

to him; it is too painful to think about, or it conflicts with his sense of ethics perhaps.

The objects or abstractions which, under certain circumstances, may incite abnormal fear are numberless; there is nothing appreciable to the senses, no idea even, which can not so act. Prof. Th. Ribot, who has made an exhaustive study of the subject, advises us, I believe, to look up all the objects in the universe if we wish to know the number of fears there can be. Some fears, a hundred or more,[1] are fairly common, and have been given special names. Technically, a morbid fear is called a phobia, from the Greek word for fear—φόβος. The name of a definite fear is obtained scientifically by prefixing to this word the Greek equivalent for the thing feared. Thus we have monophobia (fear of being alone), agoraphobia (fear of open places), claustrophobia (fear of closed places, crowded rooms), astraphobia (fear of thunder and lightning), aërophobia (fear of airy places), pathophobia (fear of disease), mysophobia (fear of filth), necrophobia (fear of death), ereutophobia (fear of blushing), metallophobia (fear of money), aichmophobia

[1] Stanley Hall, "A Study of Fears," in *Amer. Journal of Psychology*, Jan., 1897; "A Synthetic Genetic Study of Fears," in *idem*, April, 1914, July, 1914.

(fear of points), potamophobia (fear of water), and so on.

Such terminologies may possess some scientific value, but they often cause the afflicted layman who learns the technical name of his fear to conclude that he is the host of some terrible and rare malady. The fact that one is a victim of morbid fear is of most importance, for morbid fear is a symptom and not a disease, merely an indication of emotional unrest which, in turn, may be prompted by physical or mental disturbances, usually the latter. There is no specific cause or cure for each phobia; under the same inciting factors, one person will develop one form of fear, another a different form. Again, the phobias are never so serious as their names might suggest; the majority are but aggravations of fears which are present, to some degree, in all persons.

CHAPTER II

THE RESULTS OF FEAR

Physiological Changes—Their Purpose—Fear as Cause of Disease—Usual Effects of Acute and Chronic Fear—The Fear of Fear

1

As is well-known, fear produces various changes in the organism. It influences body and mind more than any other emotion, and there is no function, conscious or unconscious, that may not be modified by it. The unconscious, or automatic, activities are most subject to its excitations.

Among the typical physical manifestations of acute, moderate fear, especially when aroused by a visible object or situation, there is a contraction of the muscles of the head, face, trunk, and limbs. This causes a furrowed brow, a flexion and drawing inwards of the arms and hands, a flexion of the knees; an almost opposite, or erect, posture is present in courage. The heart beats more rapidly and forcibly, the volume of blood expelled with each beat being

greater. The blood pressure rises. The respirations are accelerated. The puplis dilate. The blood vessels of the skin contract, which results in paleness and chilliness. The sweat glands become active. In animals the skin muscles may contract, and the hair may stand on end; in human beings there is often a feeling that the hair is standing on end but it rarely, if ever, does so owing to the feebleness of the muscles incorporated in the hair follicles; as we all doubtless know, the hairs have muscles of their own.

Parenthetically, there is a common belief that the hair often turns white over night as a result of great fear; the truth of this is open to question. Of the hundreds of alleges instances, there are only a few that merit consideration. Histologic, physiologic, and other facts do not favor it. Hair consists of numerous cornified epithelial cells which are incompletely fused together. Its color is due to its pigment. White hair is hair without pigment, and while fright might so alter the hair roots that no more pigment is formed, it is not likely that it would destroy and remove the pigment already present in the shafts of the hair. There are many other notions concerning fear which will not withstand investigation. For example, frequent reference is made in literature to the alleged habit of the

ostrich which, when frightened, is said to bury its head in the sand, believing that it has wholly concealed itself. Naturalists no longer credit this.

Other physical effects of fear are a diminution of the secretions of the mouth, and of the motor and secretory activities of the stomach and intestines. The ductless glands, as the thyroid, the adrenals, the liver are stimulated, and by delicate chemical tests their products can be demonstrated in the blood. Subjectively, there are, usually after the emotion has abated and when attention can be given to them, shivering, dryness of the mouth, epigastric uneasiness, palpitation of the heart, dizziness, throbbings, thrills, hot and cold flashes, "goose flesh," an all-gone feeling. These sensations vary in nature and degree according to the peculiarities of the individual, the intensity of the emotion, and whether or not the emotion has resulted in action.

On the mental side fear produces a striking keenness of perception so that every detail connected with the object or situation exciting the fear is observed. Were it possible to examine the brain cells microscopically, changes in the arrangement of their molecules might be discovered. The most marked feature is a narrowing of the field of consciousness, the object

of which is the exclusion of all ideas which are opposed to the fulfillment of the instinct's aim. Were opposing ideas permitted to enter consciousness, fear might be routed or weakened, and the thought of flight inhibited; for instance, love, say of a child in danger, might cause one to forget one's own danger; self-esteem and patriotism might urge one to check the temptation to run away from the battle. Opposing ideas often do intrude, largely as the result of education which has this very purpose, namely, the control of undesirable instincts, or of instincts undesirable under certain circumstances, by the substitution of a more suitable instinct or sentiment.

It is interesting to note that once fear is generated the physical accompaniments invariably follow. The emotion may be modified or aborted, but not the physical manifestations, at least not entirely. This is illustrated by the many instances of heroes who have chided their bodies for yielding to fear. For example, the Marshal Vendome of France, a man of small stature, noticed, as he sat astride his big horse on the field of battle, that his body trembled. "Art afraid, little body," he said. "If thou knewest where I am going to take thee, thou wouldst be afraid indeed."

The responses of fear, once roused, can not be immediately banished by exercise of will for the reasons that they have not been produced by will and because they are independent of will. The mechanism which calls them forth is situated outside the cerebral hemisphere (the large brain), in which are contained consciousness and the higher mental faculties. All that is needed to excite this mechanism is a stimulus, which is, in the higher animals, the emotion of fear; once excited impulses are automatically sent out by way of the sympathetic nervous system (also involuntary) to all parts of the body, and when sent out they can not be recalled. But while this is true we should not assume that it is absolutely futile to contend against the results of fear; we may possess no direct control, but we do possess an indirect control. Since the key which unlocks the mechanism is fear, it would be best, first of all, were we to avoid needless fear. Secondly, since the more violent the emotion the more profound the responses, if we must fear, then let us fear mildly. Thirdly, since prolonged emotion causes prolonged reactions, instead of maintaining fear, especially because of the physical changes, let us restore tranquillity quickly, summoning to our assistance thoughts which antagonize fear.

The last admonition is particularly applicable when we are seized by a fearful emotion for a cause which we recognize as insufficient, or for no known cause. And by making use of it not only can the intensity and the duration of the emotion be subdued, but, in time, one can gain the power to displace fear almost immediately, and thereby to render its physical effects almost nil.

It is an interesting observation, also, that when the instinct of flight is blocked it is often replaced by anger, especially when a provocative object is present. And generally in such cases, the second emotion is more marked than the primary emotion. This produces a very pronounced stimulation of body and mind, so that every ounce of energy may be available in making one supreme effort to escape annihilation. Doubtless, we have noted that many timid animals will, when cornered and in danger of injury or death, display surprising courage and fighting qualities. This replacement is, under some conditions, of biologic usefulness. The changes effected by fear and by anger are almost the same, and, therefore, if one cannot save oneself by flight one may be able to do so by fighting, the latter being the instinct associated with the emotion of anger.

2

Such alterations as fear produces are not bolshevistic murmurings on the part of the body, nor are they freakish, methodless, or useless, a fact which is very apparent when we consider that, with minor modifications, identical alterations are found in all animals and all people the world wide. To repeat, their one and only object is to enable the individual to put the longest possible distance between himself and danger in the shortest possible time. There may not be many occasions today when quick getaways are required, and unless a man cares not an iota for the taunts of his fellows, he can not afford to take to his heels as often as he is tempted to do so. Nevertheless, he never knows when the necessity may arise, and an intricate apparatus which will prepare him speedily, without his giving direct thought to the matter, is by no means to be despised. For it he can thank his cave-man ancestors, who were able to develop the mechanism only after untold thousands of years of painful experiences. It has been handed down to us gratis; we are not called upon to undergo their experiences, nor do we need to be taught how to effect the alterations, no more than we need to learn how to

make the heart to beat, the liver to secrete bile, the stomach to digest; indeed, most of us are unacquainted with many of the changes, and there is no question that our physiologists have not as yet discovered all of them.

So that there may not be the slightest doubt as to the design of fear and of the alterations it causes, let us take up some of the latter in more detail.

If a person will assume the running posture he will find that it closely resembles the posture induced by fear. This posture also lessens his size,[1] and thereby exposes him less to observation and to seizure. The contraction of the muscles facilitates flight, especially at the start, and it may have some additional usefulness in minimizing the effects of blows, as from thrown objects; all of us must have noticed how we involuntarily stiffen up when expecting a physical injury.

Flight will necessitate an increased expenditure of energy. And energy can be obtained

[1] It is common for many animals, as the dog, to shrink in size and to turn their tails between the legs when overcome by fear; on the other hand, when pugnacious, they increase their size and elevate their tails. From this tail turning we get our common expressions: "He turned tail," meaning cowardice, and "He had his tail up," meaning bravery or pugnacity. It is interesting to note that the word coward is derived from the French for tail (*couard*), which in turn comes from the Latin for tail (*cauda*).

only from food. But when in danger a person can not take time to eat and to digest; were this required he would perish. Fortunately, the liver comes to his assistance; it acts as a storehouse for fuel, which exists there in the form of sugar. And under the influence of emotion it liberates this sugar into the blood, in such large amounts at times that some of the sugar escapes into the urine.

Sugar, as such, cannot be utilized by the tissues; it must first be combusted or burned. This burning is effected by oxidation. Consequently, the lungs work faster so as to supply adequate oxygen; and to facilitate freer breathing and a larger intake of air, the smaller bronchial tubes, which are normally moderately contracted, dilate. The increased lung activity will also serve to get rid of the expected large amounts of carbon dioxide gas, a waste product of tissue work.

The oxygen must be carried from the lungs to the tissues; fuel must be carried also. The rapid heart action ensures this.

Work can be properly performed only when the internal organs have a certain temperature. Therefore, the skin blood vessels are contracted at first, lest the internal temperature be insufficient and to prevent undesired dissipation of

heat. If the heat becomes excessive, work flags; to avoid this possibility, the sweat glands become more active, and with the aid of the lungs are well able to take care of any surplus heat.

In effecting flight some organs will require more blood than others. The blood supply of the stomach and intestines is greatly reduced; the work of these organs is not required at the time. This not only saves energy but it diverts blood to active organs. Some say that involuntary defecation and micturition, which sometimes occur in fear, are for the purpose of lightening the body's weight. Probably the most active organs, and the most necessary as well, are the heart, the lungs, the brain, and the muscles. As Dr. Cannon [1] points out, the arteries of the heart, lungs, and brain cease to pulsate when the blood pressure is high, as it is in fear; the lumens of the vessels are therefore relaxed, and a more continuous and liberal supply of blood is furnished to the organs. The activity of the muscles will, in itself, guarantee the muscles a sufficient amount of blood.

It is possible that one's organs will not work

[1] Walter B. Cannon, "What Strong Emotions Do To Us," in *Harper's Magazine*, July, 1922; see also *Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear, and Rage*, 2d edition. For further information along these lines the reader is referred to Dr. George W. Crile's *Origin and Nature of the Emotions*, and *A Mechanistic View of War and Peace*.

hard enough, or that one will fatigue too soon. To avoid this, the ductless glands pour forth their secretions; the latter act as whips, or stimulants. Adrenalin, for instance, can, by itself, produce most of the physical alterations characteristic of fear. It also possesses the power to delay fatigue, and to form blood clots in small wounds.

One may be in need of assistance, or one's associates may not know that they are in danger. Consequently, one cries (the cry of fear).

To escape, a person must be aware of all the factors which make up the environment, and must make good use of his thinking machine. The dilated pupils and the quickened cerebral activities aid him.

Nothing more than a study of these wonderful changes should be necessary to convince us of the harmfulness of needless fear. It is impossible to fear without exciting the entire organism; uncalled for fear therefore rouses the body for no good purpose, and wastes physical and mental capital. Again, it loads the body with substances which, in large amounts, act as poisons; the same is true of other distressing affective states, as anger, a point known to Pythagoras long ago. "Anger," he said, "makes a poison in the blood." This toxic

action is well shown in the many cases of infants that have been killed or made seriously ill by taking maternal milk shortly after maternal fright. Were action to follow the emotion little or no harm would follow, for then the liberated substances would be utilized. All emotion calls for action, and when action ensues the organism is better off for it. It is for this reason that we feel relieved when we laugh when joyful, and uncomfortable when we repress laughter; why tears dispel sadness; why fight, even profanity, an hour or less given to the woodpile or to some other form of physical exercise, take the edge off one's anger.

3

Many serious and atypical effects have been ascribed to fear. Instances of sudden death are not rare; in such cases it is reasonable to assume that the emotion was very intense, and that the individuals had some organic weakness which was unable to withstand it. In old literature fear is cited as a cause of smallpox, cholera, tuberculosis, and other infectious diseases; in fact, one woman is said to have contracted smallpox merely by looking through a window at a passer-by who had smallpox and fearing that she would contract the malady. These are

all germ-caused diseases, and therefore can not be produced by fear alone. Fear may, of course, weaken the system, and lessen one's resistance to certain germs and diseases, but, as stated, it can not bring on the diseases in the absence of the germs.

Authentic instances of diabetes, goitre, and skin disorders have been ascribed to fear. Transient illusions, hallucinations, loss of the sense of time and space, various organic ills, epilepsy, and hydrophobia are also listed. At times, fear may incite organic nervous derangements, including epilepsy, when there is a predisposition to them, but rarely, if ever, in the absence of a predisposition. Many of the reported cases of epilepsy were not true epilepsy but simulated or hysterical epilepsy. This disease, on a hysterical basis, is not unusual when there is a great fear of it. As with epilepsy, most of the reported cases of hydrophobia were not true hydrophobia. This affliction is also due to a germ, and so can not be incited by fear alone. The hysterical nature of the alleged examples is quite apparent when we learn that the affected persons barked, crawled on all fours, bit people, and in other ways tried to act like dogs. In true hydrophobia these actions do not occur.

Common, though unsuspected, effects of fear

are forms of paralysis, of loss of voice, hearing, vision. In drawing conclusions here one should be wary. It is possible for fear to cause a rupture of a cerebral blood vessel (a stroke) with loss of function of a certain physical organ or part; but in the majority of cases this does not take place. The fear has produced no injury to the brain nor to the physical parts, at least none that can be demonstrated microscopically. The only injury is a shock to the mind, which shock is reflected in some physical area. The area that may be affected varies; it may be one that has been excited particularly, which has been in use at the time of the emotion, which has been involved in a previous injury, which is inferior to the others, one about which there is some doubt as to its integrity, or one by which the painful stimuli made their entrance (the eyes, the ears). But, as stated, the parts are as intact as ever; the disturbance is only functional, and due to the fact that the brain's control over the areas has been temporarily disturbed. It is for this reason that the physician is able to cure these cases, something he could not do were the impairments the result of actual disease or injury; for example, he often cures cases of blindness, loss of voice or hearing, and paralysis, due to fear; but he could not cure

blindness caused by degeneration of the optic nerves, nor loss of voice due to atrophy of the vocal cords, nor paralysis subsequent to destructive spinal disease. The person unfamiliar with medicine often fails to grasp the various factors which may be at the roots of these maladies, and thus may attribute the few successes of the irregular practitioners of medicine, as well as the cures which take place accidentally, to sources akin to the miraculous. Indeed, the irregulars themselves often do not understand some of their cures, so that they are prone to wax warm in defense of their alleged sciences, and to believe that their methods are effective no matter what the cause of one's ailment.

In passing, we might mention that fear has been known to cure disease. For example, a lady who had not used her voice for a year, was frightened by a clap of thunder, and alarmed lest her baby, who was in the next room, might have been injured; she cried out, after which her voice was completely restored. Another lady, who was bedridden for many years because of "paralysis," made a quick exit from the bed and walked down the stairs on smelling smoke and hearing cries of fire. These instances serve to emphasize what has been said above, namely, that many maladies are purely func-

tional, and are not accompanied by any destruction of, or real loss of function in, the parts concerned. To the average mind all ills of a certain nature look alike, for example, all paralyses, but to the trained person, as a physician, there are many signs which distinguish the functional from the organic.

4

In everyday life the abnormal effects of fear are not so marked as those just described. As a rule, the fear is chronic, subdued, and is popularly called worry. Along with worry it is customary to include grief, bitterness, despair, jealousy, envy, hate, not that they are fundamentally identical with fear, but because their immediate and ultimate results are practically the same.

It is not common for worry to exist in a pure state. It is usually accompanied by attacks of acute anxiety, so that we have two groups of effects.

Because of the acute anxiety there occurs a sudden and pronounced discharge of energy into the physical channels. This may be manifest generally and more less equally distributed. Very often, however, some parts are affected more than are others. Frequently, the heart,

the stomach, or the lungs bear the brunt of the emotional discharge, giving rise to palpitation, gastric distress, dyspnea, or asthma. It is worthy of note that the anxiety may be so brief, the physical manifestations so marked and so different from the usual signs of emotion, as to mislead the physician even, especially if a definite organic impairment is present. Instead of heart, stomach, and lung disturbances, which, as stated, are most common, the predominating signs may be intense headache, difficult swallowing, diarrhea, pain in the muscles, tremblings, dizziness, fainting, weakness in the legs, frequency of urination. The parts affected vary greatly with the individual. None of us react exactly alike to the emotions, and in each of us, probably, there are certain nervous pathways less resistant than others and which serve as convenient outlets for emotional discharge.

As a consequence of chronic fear the organs are moderately stimulated at first. This produces an on-edge feeling, a condition of physical and mental tension. The reaction to feeble stimuli is exaggerated, and thus slight noises and similar disturbances are unduly noted. In addition, there may be involuntary twitchings, grimaces, starts, purposeless movements, these representing efforts on the part of the dammed-

up emotion to find egress. Stimulation later gives way to depression, owing to the inability of the organs to stand the constant drain upon them. The digestion, the movements of the intestines, the activities of the liver, become sluggish; the sequelæ, indigestion, constipation, and insomnia are natural under the circumstances. The thoughts become cloudy, mental ability grows less. The blood pressure falls; the ductless glands show signs of disfunction. There follow fatigue, languor, apathy for work, pains and aches of various kinds. Finally, unless the emotion is checked, the mental and physical disorganization is so pronounced that the sufferer is labelled neurasthenic, and, if he is treated like the majority of his kind, is told that he is a victim of overwork, and is advised to rest, to go to a sanitarium, or to take a trip to Florida or to the "old country."

5

So much for the effects of fear which can be described, and which we all can understand. But unless one has been a victim of chronic fear, one can have no good idea as to the severity of its pain. Fear is, probably, the most cruel of all pains; it is no wonder that the ancients deified it. And not only is the sufferer racked

by fear itself, but also by the fear of fear; that is, fear begets fear, and each new fear adds to the unrest. It may be worth-while for us to examine here, briefly, a few of these offsprings of fear.

Many, if not most, of those who have morbid fears wonder if they are not cowards, and utterly different from their fellows. Not wishing to be considered so, they usually hide their fears, even from their physicians. It is natural to deny fear, but it certainly is imprudent not to be frank with one's medical advisor. Morbid fears are not a sign of cowardice; men who have faced death many times without flinching have had them; a famous general, for example, lived in great dread of cats. One may be sure that the physician knows that these fears are not "foolish," nor signs of lack of manliness. He knows, too, that they are very real, that they are very prevalent, that they have as much basis and excuse as a physical disease, and deserve as much, if not more, consideration.

Another anxiety is the fear of incurability. There was a time when morbid fears were regarded with pessimism, but great progress has been made in understanding the regions of the mind; in fact, it is not often that the specialist is forced to say, "This disease is beyond my

practice." Not only is there likelihood of cure, provided the sufferer does his part, but one can become just as optimistic and free of care as one had been pessimistic and torn by anxiety.

The fear of present or future insanity lurks in all the chronically fearful, as well as in practically all the nervous. The fears are often so odd, so tenacious, and the control over the thoughts so feeble, that any other termination seems to be improbable. This fear need not be entertained, for, as stated, the chances are that one will be restored to normal. Very rarely does fear cause insanity; it is not, in itself, a recognized inciter of insanity. There are, of course, insane persons who have fears of various kinds, but their fears are associated with disturbances of consciousness, delusions, hallucinations, and so on. Again, the fears of the insane are very grotesque, are believed in implicitly, serve as bases for arguments, and there is no desire for their removal. No similar picture exists in the usual sufferer from morbid fears.

CHAPTER III

THE CAUSES OF ABNORMAL FEAR

Heredity and Childhood Influences—Physical and Mental Incitants—Fears Due to Sex—Prevention of Fear—Prevention and Cure of Sexual Fears

1

WERE we to mention all the direct and indirect causes of abnormal fear, we could easily fill a book many times the size of this. It may be stated, however, that in most cases abnormal fear does not develop without a predisposition to it. The predisposition is present from early life, and is brought about in one or both of two ways.

One of these ways is by heredity. In the hereditary cases the persons proceed from parents who lack nervous stability in their germ plasms. They do not inherit morbid fear as such, nor any specific fears; merely a tendency toward abnormal fear. It may be well to mention, also, that while the nervous system includes the brain, spinal cord, and the nerves, it is rarely

that these parts are demonstrably diseased either in morbid fear or in functional nervousness in general. The fault resides in the psyche or mind, especially in the realm of the emotions; and in the power to make suitable adaptations to disturbing conditions of life which are of slight importance to those whose make-up is more stable.

In most instances the susceptibility to abnormal fear is not at all, or but slightly, innate; it is acquired in early life; usually during the first four or five years. Depending upon the influences brought to bear during the formative period, one can be made courageous or fearful, happy or discontented, and not only during childhood but throughout life.

While accidental experiences and serious illness in childhood may sensitize the nervous system and lead to the easy development of fears, the most prevalent source is improper pedagogy. The indiscretions here are many. For example, the child may be reared like an only child; or it may be shielded too much; or it may be made a great favorite of one or both parents; only children and favorite children are, even when adults, notorious for their domineering dispositions, their exaggerated self-esteem, their failure to adjust themselves satisfactorily to the prob-

lems of life, their tendency to become introspective and morbid when opposed in any way. The child may grow up in an atmosphere reeking with superstition, and thus be inclined to fear its life long. Its plastic and impressionable mind may receive countless suggestions from the parents' display of nervous or organic ills, and consequently it may become self-centered and hypochrondriacal. It may be made unduly religious, and thereby overconscientious and scrupulous, not only in religious matters but also in the small affairs of daily existence. It may be dominated by, and made to feel absolutely dependent upon, the parent; and its instinct of self-assertion, and its feeling of confidence, made so weak that it betrays excessive timidity and submissiveness. Its education in respect to the strengthening of will power, independence, initiative, decision, judgment, may be deficient, which renders it weak-willed, vacillating, easily suggestible, solitary, unable to compete happily and successfully with its normal fellows. Organic or psychic inferiority—which may be incited by physical defects, repeated failures at school or in contests with others, unfavorable comparisons with other children, shame engendered by errors and lapses of various kinds—may create a feeling of inade-

quacy, hopelessness, doubts as to ability, with resultant brooding and desire to escape contact with reality. Excessive indulgence in reverie may promote a love of solitude, expectations that all things will be conquered easily, desires to rise too high socially and professionally, and dissatisfaction and melancholy when these wishes are frustrated. Important are psychic shocks or traumata due to frightening experiences or stories, or cruel punishments, which, though apparently erased from mind, may make a profound impression and promote fears in general or in specific.

2

However, the predisposition to abnormal fear is established, it is usually necessary that some further inciting cause be present if fear is to become marked. There are some people who are always fearful, but in most cases the abnormal fear-tendency remains quiescent; the same is true of fears which have already made an appearance, though the latter may recur from time to time in dreams or exist in the form of marked aversions. In other words, as long as all goes well with the predisposed individual he is mentally quiet; when obstacles or difficulties are encountered his fear is roused and becomes

active. For example, a certain man is very optimistic and healthy when his business affairs are in good condition; when trade declines, he begins to fear failure, becomes greatly concerned about various physical abnormalities, etc.; when business improves his fears depart.

The inciting causes are divisible into two groups—physical and mental.

There are a number of medical psychologists who are sceptical as to the influence of somatic disorders in generating pathologic fear. Their viewpoint is understandable. Clinical experience in the treatment of phobiacs shows that in the majority of cases physical errors have no important rôle in the etiology of the fears, and that the physical disorders are only results of the emotional unrest. Yet it cannot be denied that the physical has an influence upon the mental. Well-being of body tends to be associated with well-being of mind, disturbed physical states with the reverse. All of us can appreciate the atrabiliarness of spirit, and the ease with which fear is generated in the presence of fatigue or illness. The somatic factor has undoubtedly been exaggerated, but it can not be ignored. No two persons are exactly alike in their temperaments, nor are their reactions to disturbing stimuli the same. Where one is

markedly upset and fearful because of a malady known or unknown to him, another may not be affected at all, at least emotionally.

The physical impairments which may instigate abnormal fears in certain persons are numerous. We might mention visual impairments, infections of various kinds, disturbances of the ductless glands, falling of the viscera, dysfunction of the heart, kidneys, and other organs. These act in different ways—sometimes by toxins which irritate the brain cells, sometimes by disturbing stimuli which reach the brain from the malfunctioning area, sometimes by denying the organism substances necessary for harmonious performance. They do not tend to promote definite fears, merely to awaken fear; they are likely to play a real part in accounting for fear when their existence is unknown to the individual. If the presence of the physical disorder is known, and is made a matter of concern, there may follow hypochondriacal fears in general, and, depending upon the part involved, certain specific fears, as the fear of insanity in insomnia, of sudden death in heart disease, of asphyxia in lung disease. Sometimes physical impairments engender a feeling of inferiority, a consciousness of personal deficiency and loss, with such fears as fear of failure, fear of social

contact. When the defect is unknown there is often unaccountable anxiety, an idea that there is something wrong somewhere; the anxiety may be chronic and moderate, or acute and severe depending upon the force with which the stimuli from the involved area reach the brain. As before stated, anxiety does not remain without an assigned cause, and there is scarcely anything which may not be blamed for it, so that the alleged cause becomes an object of fear.

Not rarely when physical errors provoke emotional imbalance old bases of fear are roused. There are buried in the minds of all persons certain distressing experiences, certain superstitions, misgivings, doubts, mistakes, which have never been made fully right with the individuals. When the physical tone is good these are out of mind, probably through repression or the power of the sentiments opposed to them, but when the harmony is poor the will power is weaker, the ability to repress less, pleasant and balancing sentiments are roused with difficulty, and the thoughts naturally tend toward melancholy, so that these old experiences tend to come to mind. It is astonishing how persons who laugh at certain fears when in good health brood about them when ill, and how incidents of the past, recollected with difficulty or

not at all, in health, appear in consciousness without effort, as if involuntarily and automatically; in fact, there seems to be an hypermnesia at such times. In some cases a particular fear is awakened, in others the fears shift from one thing to another. The same tendency to memory exaltation and to the resurrection of past distressing events is also found when the mental balance is disturbed by psychic causes only.

As intimated, psychic factors account for more abnormal fears than do physical factors; indeed, they are so important that, like Pinel, an old alienist, the physician rarely goes wrong in asking each new patient the question, "Have you suffered vexation, grief, or reverse of fortune?"

As with the somatic, the mental instigators of fear are many. Among them may be included such comparatively simple things as monotony, absence of absorbing interests in life, insufficient recreation or occupation, which in themselves tend to induce introspectiveness. The loss of a loved one, as a parent, may be the inciter; in such cases the grief and anxiety are not always due to love alone, but often to a semi-conscious idea that one has neglected the relative and is responsible for the death, and

therefore in danger of damnation; it may be that in a transient thought one wished the parent dead and now suffers because of the wish. Conflicts between the world of reality and the world of desires are prolific causes. Thus a person may not be able to adapt himself to a domineering boss, to features about his work, to his home life, to lost love, to financial reverses, to religious teachings, to moral lapses, to denied ambition, which renders him self-centered, moody, and unduly anxious about the physical effects of the emotional unrest, or which awakens old fears or generates new ones. Among other causes distressing dreams might be noted, particularly in persons who are superstitious and suggestible. Such dreams are generally the results of mental turmoil, especially when frequent, but in certain subjects an occasional fearful dream may incite a marked fear of the objects seen in the dream, or intensify a certain fear if the dream has been concerned with the fear.

3

So far we have said nothing relative to a cause of fear which, as a rule, receives scant attention, namely the sexual. This aspect of the subject may be disagreeable to some of us,

but it is of sufficient importance to demand consideration.

As everyone should know, the sex instinct is as old as man himself, and is one of the most powerful of all instincts. It is ingrained in us, and so is a matter of racial inheritance. It is present in everyone without exception, in the saint as well as the sinner, in the refined as well as in the unrefined, in king and subject; in this matter, the Colonel's Lady and Judy O'Grady are truly sisters under their skin. (Sex is not peculiar to humans, however, for it is found in animals, birds, fishes, flowers, trees, etc.) Biologically, its purpose is the propagation of the race; it has, of course, a pleasurable component. Its struggle for expression is shown in many ways, as in children's playing with dolls, in the physical and character changes at puberty and adolescence, in the adornments designed to make one attractive to the opposite sex, in love songs, in springtime fancies, in the universal love of and desire for children, in the state of being in love, the inciting cause of which is still a riddle. Its power is also shown in the sexual ideas that come to all people even though they fervently wish these thoughts away, in the sexual dreams which come to all.

In early days it is probable that the sex in-

stinct found free expression, and that it was looked upon as natural and proper; it is probable also that sex desire once manifested itself only at certain periods, as it does in the animal world; it may be even that monogamy was the rule, though today man is considered polygamous by nature. Be this as it may, it was found, as society progressed, that wide liberty in respect to sex was not conducive to the welfare of the herd nor to the individual, and marriage and certain laws, written and unwritten, governing sex life were evolved. Still later, especially with the growth of the Christian religion, celibacy was encouraged, inferentially at least, as the ideal life; it was also taught by some moralists that if marriage occurred connubial relations should occur only for the purpose of having children, otherwise they were sinful. These doctrines, by the way, not only tended to create conflict by interfering with the normal sex life, but they also hurt religion and society since the better class of citizens embraced them, and consequently left few or no children, whereas the non-religious and the degenerates, to whom they had no appeal, increased and multiplied. Again, in the hope of preventing premature intercourse, it was thought best to bring up children in absolute ignorance of sex, and

if sex manifestations appeared, to treat these as if sex were disgusting, heinous, something foreign to one's nature, fit only for a brute. Today the same teaching obtains, so that few people reach maturity with sound knowledge of the place of the instinct in life. Such enlightenment as is sought from parents or authorities meets with fairy stories, such as the stork, or is treated with silence, punishment even. But in spite of the parents who think that the child has been deceived, impressions are gained from acquaintances, from observations of animals, from books, and from equally unwholesome sources. It is not surprising, therefore, that many persons are unable to find a solution to the sex problem, in marriage or out, nor is it remarkable that unrest due to sex exists.

As a rule, those who possess strong nervous organizations make some kind of a satisfactory personal adaptation to sex, and develop no neurotic ailments. The nervous do not often make a good adjustment—because of their refusal to think of the problem or their lack of knowledge as to how to solve it, because of their scruples, and for other reasons. Due to this failure, and the fact that somatic and psychic discomforts affect them more than they do others, they tend

to suffer from various disturbances, fears particularly.

The sexual unrest may also proceed from physical or mental sources, though in practically all cases there is a mixture of the two.

On the physical side, the fault is usually tension of the sex organs. When, for any reason, these organs are continually, or very frequently, stimulated, without dispersal of the energy generated, there ensues local discomfort and irritation, followed by psychic tension, manifested by irritability, nervousness, fret, worry, and attacks of acute anxiety. The paroxysms of anxiety may cause generalized physical alterations, or certain areas, as the heart, may be particularly affected, and lead the person to believe that these areas are diseased and responsible for the emotion.

The mechanism by which the mental unrest is evolved is rather complex. A simple explanation is as follows: Because the sex zone is tense or irritated masses of disturbing stimuli are constantly sent to the brain. These stimuli are sufficient to divert attention, to interrupt the free flow of one's thoughts, to promote a sense of something wrong, and thus to sponsor unpleasant and fearful ideas. Practically, identical disturbances of mental harmony, though

on a smaller scale, may follow disturbances in other parts of the body, as in chronic distention of the lower intestine due to accumulated waste. Often the stimuli reach the brain with great force and suddenness, with resultant acute and marked mental unrest. In most cases the persons affected are, or profess to be, unaware of the basic cause of their troubles. This is because they do not appreciate the influence of physical disharmonies upon the mind, or because the organs involved are taboo from thought.

The causes of the physical tension are varied. They may be frequent libidinous reveries, prolonged courtships accompanied by undue amorousness, unsuitable reading, sensual dances, rich foods and drinks, idleness, immoral companions, the early loss of a husband or wife, local or systemic disorders which irritate the sex organs. During the menopause glandular changes occur which sometimes produce sexual excitement, and which sometimes lead previously austere ladies to exhibit strange actions, such as elopement, chasing men, to believe that men are pursuing them. A similar excitation due to metabolic changes may also take place in elderly males; in males past middle life an enlarged prostate gland may be at fault. In the married the

commonest causes are frigidity in the female, impotence in the male, and ignorance as to the proper conduct of the sexual relations, whereby one or both of the parties are prevented from satisfying their desires.

The psychic sources of fear on a sexual basis are so numerous and complicated that we are forced to allude to but a few of them.

A frequent cause is the use of devices which have as their object the prevention of pregnancy. There is a general idea that contraceptives are promoters of various weaknesses and diseases; for instance, bad eyesight, loss of virility, "drying up of the brain"; consequently, one who employs them is likely to have somatic fears. They conflict with the religious and ethical standards of many, with resultant fears of expulsion from the church, damnation, social criticism. Again, the devices may cause unrest if they thwart one from satisfying a natural longing for children; this is very true in childless persons whose parental instincts are strong. Persons who do not think that contraceptives are harmful, unethical, or unreligious suffer comparatively little or no harm from them, other things being equal. It must be said, however, that contraceptives are not used with entire willingness, that they are disgusting to many persons, that nature made

no provision for them, and that they tend to interfere with the natural conduct of the relations; they therefore favor dissatisfaction and mild neurotic disturbances in the majority of cases.

The fear of pregnancy—we refer to married persons—troubles many, even when contraceptives are used owing to the unreliability with which the latter are regarded. In fact, any number of women, men to a less extent, live in secret anxiety from month to month on this account. The causes of the dread of pregnancy are, of course, varied; for instance, financial conditions, the pains of labor, early and forgotten fearful tales concerning the birth process, denials children entail, dislike of the husband with a desire, conscious or unconscious, not to be dependent upon him in any way. The conflict between the wish to avoid pregnancy and the wish to fulfill marital expectations is often sufficient in itself to generate irritability, fret, and other disturbances; as a rule, the affected persons do not appreciate the real origin of their troubles. Frequently, the fear is kept repressed as much as is possible, and when the thought of probable pregnancy breaks through, it often produces intense anxiety; indeed, some women are terror-stricken by the thought.

Early impressions concerning the sexual relations are more or less common causes of faulty maladaptation to normal sex life. One of the parties, usually the woman, may have been taught that sex is disgusting, unrefined, that frigidity and continence are ideal. With marriage she is supposed to alter these notions, but owing to the tenacity of the early ideas she can not do so, at least fully, and is thereby unable to adjust herself to the married state. One side of her being urges her to take a certain course; the other personality opposes it. There follows a conflict of desires and a state of physical and mental disquiet. Should the sex demands be strong and should she refrain from heeding them, she suffers because of physical tension; should she submit to the act she is overcome by a sense of shame, disgust, unworthiness. Not only is her own sex life disturbed but also that of her mate who, because of the wife's repugnance, frigidity, and passivity, can not find an outlet for his own sex wishes.

Among other impressions which affect the sex life unfavorably are undue fixations of the person upon one of the parents or upon the home life; this prevents the person from transferring his or her love fully to a love object outside the home; if marriage takes place there is likely to

be discontent, irritability, a desire to return to the family circle. Uncouth introduction into sex facts in early life or on the marital night may cause repugnance, an aversion to the husband, a fear of the sex act, and an unwillingness to perform it. The same may be said of disquieting pictures and stories concerning sex relations, which, though apparently forgotten, promote fear of sex contact. Often when there is a repugnance to the sex act the development of somatic ills is somewhat purposeful, inasmuch as the plea of illness affords an excuse for not submitting to it.

Sex peccadilloes of the past or present are also prevalent provokers of fear. Thus, onanism (self-abuse, masturbation) may evolve the idea that one is in danger of insanity, of weak-mindedness, of lost manhood, of sterility, of damnation. It may create a profound feeling of disgust, guilt, unworthiness, shame. Or one may believe that the habit is revealed in one's features, that people detect it, that the eyes of God have been upon one; and hence fear of discovery, fear of persons, fear of eyes. In many cases there is developed an aversion to, which may amount to a fear of, the opposite sex.

(That much distress should be traceable to onanism is not surprising, considering its com-

parative prevalence, the abhorrence with which it is regarded, and the many serious effects that have been ascribed to it by charlatans and over-zealous moralists. A transient period of onanism is so common at puberty that many physicians regard it as more or less normal at this time; the chief danger is that it will be continued. Doubtless excesses do harm, but largely because they waste energy, and create conflict; the harm is not so serious nor so lasting as is often alleged. We read, in books by moral extremists and charlatans, that the practice will cause one to end one's days in a mad house, or in an institution for the feeble-minded, or that it will send one to an early grave. If such cases exist, they are rare indeed. The practice is, of course, unnatural, unethical, and undesirable; and, since it can be cured, it is not to be condoned. Little if any good can be accomplished, however, by surrounding it with falsehood; in fact, false teachings create more neurotics than they, seemingly, strive to prevent. The best advice for that large number of persons who trace their urinary, sexual, and other difficulties to a past period of masturbation is that they wipe a sponge over the memory, convinced that their ills are children of their own auto-suggestions.)

It is not unknown for certain persons, espe-

cially young females whose minds are preoccupied by sexual ideas, and who are probably mildly stimulated physically by glandular changes, to believe that they are in danger of sexual assault from various sources. They may have observed the sex acts of farm and other animals, and identified or associated the animals with sex; an inordinate fear of the animals develops, not because of the animals themselves but because of what they symbolize. Or sex aggression may have been likened to the entrance of burglars, with an excessive fear that burglars will break into their rooms. There may be, too, a phobia for tramps, soldiers, strangers, and others who are supposedly promiscuous and care-free sexually. Sometimes it is believed that all males have designs upon them; indeed, it may be claimed that criminal assault has been perpetrated. Only recently a minister of the gospel committed suicide following an accusation of this kind; later, the young woman responsible for the charge confessed that her story had absolutely no foundation in fact. There are any number of cases of persons of integrity whose characters have been blackened, often irrevocably, by similar fanciful tales.

Such are some of the ways in which disturbances of the sex life may promote fears. At

times the sex element is alone provocative of the fears; it may, however, merely add weight to other conflicts. From what has been said it is hoped that no reader will infer that the presence of a fear due to sex, especially in the single, indicates that the sufferer is evil-minded or has evil desires; if a wish exists it is usually a wish to understand the facts of sex, which is natural. And considering that the sex instinct is part of one's nature, and that there is so much mystery and misconception concerning it, it is not shameful for one to be troubled by it. Again, it might be emphasized that fears like those mentioned may arise from sources that have nothing to do with sex; one should, therefore, suspend judgment as to the cause of these fears in any given case.

4

A reading of the causes of abnormal fear should be sufficient to show that they are both preventable and curable. From a preventive point of view, the most important points are good heredity, proper pedagogy, and the maintenance of physical and mental health. Though all are of great value, we call particular attention to child-training. As before stated, more are made to fear than are born to fear. One's

parental duty is not fulfilled by providing the child with food, clothing, shelter; by teaching it the three R's, or giving it a college education even; by summoning a doctor when it is ill. The child's mental health is of greater importance; better, by far, a twisted limb than a twisted mind; with the one a large measure of peace is possible; with the other only misery. Yet there are few of us who do not daily sin against the child's present and future happiness. We rear the child vicariously, molding it like the others, forgetting or ignoring the fact that all children are not patterned alike, that they are not equally sound in their nervous and emotional stability. We not only foster fear by injudicious stories of ghosts, murders, bogies, omens, but we ridicule such fears as the child acquires accidentally, taking no pains to win the child's confidence, to understand its mental life, to help it to overcome its difficulties. Lest it go wrong, and in an effort to correct it, we hedge it with unexplained "do nots"; with disparaging and crushing remarks; with erroneous and harmful notions concerning morals, life in general; with terrifying ideas of what it may expect in the present world and in the world to come. In short, the modern child's education is an education in fear; and

if its fear instinct becomes hypertrophied, giving it no rest by day or by night, and hindering it from adjusting itself to the problems of adult life, it is not surprising under the circumstances.

In later chapters we shall have more to say as to the prevention and cure of fear in general and in specific. Since we may not have occasion to deal with the sex aspect of the question, it may be advisable to take this up here, though necessarily briefly.

Apart from providing the child with a hereditarily sound nervous system, and strengthening it by wise pedagogy in general, the best way to prevent sex fears is by adequate attention to the child's sex life; there are some who go so far as to state that if the child's sexual development proceeds normally no nervous troubles are possible; this view is rather sweeping, but it contains much truth.

The child's sex care includes many things. For example, it requires that the parents avoid undue expressions of affection for the child, so that it may, at the proper time, transfer its love to a suitable love object, and not be bound mentally to the home. It requires, also, that the parents concede to the child its right to marry, provided, of course, that the child has reached

a suitable age and makes a wise selection. Many parents, who are not dependent upon their children, in a material sense, oppose all alliances, however desirable; their object is to retain the children's affection; and while the children may submit through a feeling of duty, they often do so at the sacrifice of happiness, sometimes at the sacrifice of morality.

In general, the child's sex care entails the teaching of sex hygiene as ordinarily understood. The wisdom of this teaching, as well as the age at which to begin it, is still a matter of controversy. There is comparatively little danger of harm, however, if the instruction is begun at, or slightly after, puberty; at this age most children, though innocent to doting parents, know more of sex, and of the erroneous, than is imagined. The instruction should not be carried to an extreme, whenever given; and it is very important that the informant be tactful and competent, else one may do more harm than good, and the matter were better left alone. And one might bear in mind that the object of the instruction is not solely the prevention of premature sex indulgence, but chiefly the removal and circumvention of sex impressions which may, and which often do, cause maladjustment in later life. Knowledge of sex is

not, in itself, a barrier to impurity; many of those who are well versed in sex, and well aware of its dangers, are the most licentious.

In addition to instruction in sex physiology, it is necessary that one instil—without resorting to Hell-fire doctrines or inciting fear—a lofty sentiment toward morals, and toward the opposite sex; encourage the child to build up its self-control; point out the harmlessness and desirability, in both male and female, of continence; and the duty of reaching adult life with as clean a slate as one has a right to expect his or her mate to have. The celibate or continent life is not to be held up as the goal, rather marriage; and marriage should be considered, not as something to be entered lightly and as lightly terminated, but as a sacred thing, as one of the most important events in one's life, and worthy of the most serious thought. Obviously, if the domestic relations of the parents are noticeably strained, the child will not be favorably influenced by idealistic teachings as to marriage. For this reason, it is prudent that the child be shielded from parental bickerings. And we might remember that because some marriages are unhappy, this is not a sign that all are. Yet many persons who are disappointed err grievously and spoil the lives of others by giv-

ing young people pessimistic ideas concerning the married state.

There is much that could be said relative to marriage as a means of prevention of sex fears. Marriage is the natural goal for most people, and is necessary for their health, happiness, and integrity, not only because it affords an outlet for the reproductive and parental instincts, but also because it has a steadying influence, fulfills the longing for a home, for companionship, and so on. It is perfectly possible to forego it, to be celibate and continent, and remain in good health; this is especially true if the sex instinct is not roused by loose companions, sensual reveries, or actual gratification; and if the sex energy is drained off into satisfactory channels. But, as stated, marriage is advisable for the majority; again, it is demanded for the continuity of our social system. As for those who say that continence is impossible, we might ask them if they hold this view as to their unmarried brothers and sisters, or their widowed or divorced parents.

The most desirable age for marriage is between twenty-one and twenty-five for the female, before thirty at least; and between twenty-five and thirty, before thirty-five at least, for the male. Marriage prior to the ages

mentioned is open to many objections, though there are numerous instances where early marriages have been very successful. For one thing, it is unwise that one become a parent before reaching full physiological development. Again, early marriages are not likely to be associated with prudent selection, the wage earner has no secure business position, and the coming of children and the added difficulties of existence tend to spoil the outlook on life, and to prove severe handicaps to progress and happiness. Late marriages, on the other hand, render child-bearing more difficult; they are often contracted just for the sake of being married, which also causes rash selection, and if, in the meanwhile, no suitable ethical exit for the blocked sex instinct is found, there is a tendency toward immorality, or toward neurotic disturbances, especially in those whose instincts are strong.

Preferably, the persons should be of, or near, the same age, or with the male a few years the senior. Disparity in age should not exceed ten years, and should always be on the side of the male. A disparity of more than fifteen years is not favorable. The points of view, the interests, the sex lives, and many other things tend to conflict; again, these marriages resemble the relations of father and daughter, when the male

is much older, or of mother and son, when the female is the elder, than of husband and wife.

A word as to the conduct of the engagement period. Temperance in the manifestations of one's affection, and the avoidance of all that savours of undue intimacy, are very desirable, especially when the engagement is prolonged. Frequent meetings accompanied by ardent embraces and osculations often rouse sexual feeling, and in the female particularly may sponsor anxiety, restlessness, and other disturbances.

The selection of a mate deserves more study than it ordinarily receives. From a eugenic standpoint, the contracting parties should be free of such serious defects as are definitely transmissible by heredity. Considering the great harm wrought by the venereal diseases, especially upon innocent wives and children, no one having these maladies should marry until assured that they have been cured. For marital harmony and continuity of the marital ties and sex interest, it is necessary that one's mate possess a physical and an intellectual attraction that promises to be permanent. The intellectual attraction applies forcibly in persons who are educated. Neither the physical nor the intellectual should be emphasized, particularly the physical; in fact, marriage entered

into solely because of physical appeal or the desire for physical possession can not be happy, nor does it often endure. However, the physical must be given its value, else the attraction may wane and be diverted to other bosoms, or, in case scruples prevent, there may arise dissatisfaction and neuroses.

Of great weight is the fact that the engaged couple should receive, before marriage, intelligent counsel relative to the life they are about to enter; as a rule, this advice can be obtained only from a physician; the woman may, if she prefers, consult a female physician. On the woman's part this will remove the idea that sex is unholy and shameful, and will in other ways enable her to adapt herself to marriage. It will aid the man to have a more intelligent and sympathetic consideration for his wife, will prevent his causing shock and repugnance, and will harmonize the relations. There is considerable ignorance in respect to the hygiene of marriage, even among those who are supposedly erudite in sex. More than we realize, divorces alleged to be due to incompatibility of temperament, desertion, non-support, and similar "innocent" causes are traceable to lack of knowledge of the proper conduct of the sex life; in many cases, they can be ascribed to the shock and repug-

nance caused by uncouth husbands on the marriage day. On the other hand, many a woman clings to an unworthy husband, and many a husband endures an unworthy spouse because the sex lives are satisfactory.

With many people the art of making love becomes more or less of a dead issue after the first few years of married life. This not only militates against the success of the sex life, but against the success of the marriage as a whole. Numerous reasons can be given for the waning of love, but considering that the persons have common interests and are suited for one another, there is probably no greater cause than carelessness, as in the practice of courtesy, in bestowing deserved praises and compliments, in maintaining beauty and neatness, in preserving the niceties of life. There is much value attached to separate beds, and to separate rooms; in fact, separate beds, and preferably separate rooms, are to be encouraged if only because they are more sanitary and more conducive to restful sleep. Financial conditions often prevent this arrangement, and there are many cases where the practice of sleeping together works out very well, but in other instances the use of the same bed and the same room causes sex to lose its element of mystery, and promotes a feel-

ing of satiation, disgust, and dissatisfaction; this is more often true of persons who are refined, idealistic, or esthetic.

Finally, the newly-married might bear in mind that marriage is almost certain to topple over, or to severely strain, many premarital expectations. One will find that her hero is by no means a god; that his heroine is not an angel, but a human being who has a mortal's defects. Annoying idiosyncrasies which one has previously disregarded or failed to notice will command attention. The close association will not favor the Romeo-Juliet dreams of the engagement period. The trials of life will force one to postpone entrance into castles, the purchase of fine automobiles, the giving of lavish entertainments. However, one must make allowances, be philosophical, see the humorous side, play the glad game bravely, and without bitterness.

Once sexual fears have developed, it is necessary that an ethical physician be consulted; by all means should one avoid the charlatan whose stock in trade is fear, and who leeches his victims by exaggerating simple conditions and physiological processes; some of these fear-mongers even go so far as to diagnose dreaded ailments when these do not exist at all. As in other fears no two cases are exactly alike, and

therefore the treatment can not be the same. Even though physical tension should be present, actual gratification is by no means indicated, as many mistakenly believe. Gratification leads to further conflicts, lowers the moral standards, exposes to disease, fosters ideas of guilt, and in other ways does great harm. Unfortunately, as a result of loose interpretation of psychoanalytic teachings, the weak and the irresponsible, seeking an excuse for license, have urged that one abandon oneself to the satisfaction of all desires, on the assumption that it is unhealthful to repress and deny instincts. The Freudians do emphasize the rôle of sex in life—too much so, many contend—but they do not maintain that the settlement of conflict is to be found in sexual indulgence; indeed, they warn against such a procedure. And when one considers that fears of a sexual origin are just as frequent in those who give free rein to their passions as in those who are continent, and that in all cases of sexual fears there is a mental factor involved, which factor is more important than the physical, it should be obvious that indulgence would be of no benefit.

Nor is marriage advisable, though in long-engaged couples it may be of value, other things being equal. That it is not a specific is shown

by the fact that sex conflicts are as common among the married as among the single. Robert Burton, by the way, long ago recognized the part which impeded sex instincts played in the genesis of physical and mental unrest. He says that the best and surest remedy for many maids, widows, barren women, and others whose heart-strings do beat and burn fearfully, who have many physical complaints, who have terrifying dreams, a foolish kind of bashfulness, who are timorous, sad, easily alarmed, is to see them well-placed and married to a good husband.

To repeat, the best course is to consult a physician. All that may be required for cure is a talk on the meaning of sex, on how its energy may be diverted, say by work, especially creative work, by social welfare endeavors, by religion, by adopting a child. In the married an understanding of marital hygiene may be all that is necessary. In some instances it may be desirable to explore the mind so that the buried impressions which are preventing one from adjusting oneself to the sex life may be uncovered, which, with a little explanation from the physician, will restore harmony.

CHAPTER IV

UNCONSCIOUS FEARS

What They Are—The Conditioned Reflex, Fear of the Dark, of Lightning, Closed Places, Water, etc.—Likes and Dislikes—Fears by Accidental Association — Fears Based on Physical Disorders—Removal of Unconscious Fears

1

Not infrequently the physician has patients who, judged by the usual standards, possess indubitable courage, but who are exceedingly afraid in the presence of a cat, who dare not cross a street, who become terrified in open or closed places, or because of such a simple thing as a headache. Practically all of these victims of morbid fear have good intelligence; none of them is "crazy" or "foolish." Again, they are physically sound, so that neither organic brain nor organic physical disease is accountable for their troubles. To tell them that their fears are unreasonable is to tell them what they already know; and logic, persuasion, platitudes, and the like are of little or no help to them.

A noticeable feature about this class of patients is that they do not know why they are afraid. They may offer a reason, but one which is unsatisfactory to themselves and to their physicians. All they realize is that certain objects, situations, or abstractions, practically harmless in themselves, fill them with apprehension. The apprehension is undesirable and painful, but they say that they can not help it.

Since the real causes of the fears are hidden, the fears are called unconscious fears. Conscious fears are, of course, those whose sources are fully within the awareness of the individual. For instance, a man has a pain in the abdomen about which he is much disturbed; he is upset, however, not because of the pain itself but because he thinks that it is a sign of tumor (which is the real fear). Mosso tells of an old soldier who had gone through many battles, but who could not pass a deserted chapel in the mountains without shivering and looking around, as if someone were about to seize him; he knew that this was due to the fact that in childhood he had seen the corpse of a murdered man carried into a chapel; an old servant had threatened to shut him up with the corpse unless he behaved. Gelineau mentions a man who, while walking backward on a terrace at the top of

his house, failed to notice that the balustrade was missing at one spot; he would have fallen if he had not been grasped; he developed a fear of open places. Now, if the first-mentioned person did not realize that his anxiety was prompted by a fear of tumor; if the soldier had forgotten the childhood incident; if Gelineau's patient had failed to remember the near-falling experience; the fears would be unconscious—that is, their actual sources would be hidden from the individuals.

Unconscious fears originate in many ways, and are often difficult to fathom, even by close students of them. We shall, therefore, confine ourselves to some of the more simple types.

2

Frequent provokers of unconscious fears are painful emotional events of the past which have been forgotten, or which have not been accorded their proper value.

There are several methods by which the genesis of these fears may be explained, but probably the least intricate is by means of the so-called conditioned reflex.

Doubtless, we are all acquainted with simple reflexes, especially those which are manifest physically. A reflex is, of course, a reaction

which follows an appropriate stimulus. Thus, if the tendon of the knee is tapped, the knee jerks; if an irritating substance is placed inside the nose, one sneezes; if one inadvertently places one's hand upon a hot stove, the hand is quickly withdrawn. Exercise of will, a knowledge of the various factors involved are not required for these results; in fact, many reflexes, as the knee-jerk, can be elicited when a person is unconscious providing the nervous system is intact.

The jerking of the knee, the sneezing, the drawing away of the hand are reasonable reactions, for the stimuli are adequate. They are called unconditioned reflexes because they are present from birth; one does not need to learn them. There is, however, another type of reflex action, acquired only by experience, whereby indifferent stimuli gain the power to evoke responses that do not properly belong to them. For example:

If one shows meat to a hungry dog, there follows a flow of saliva, a watering of the mouth. This is a natural response, and takes place with a sufficient cause. Were one to show to a hungry dog a certain color, or to ring a bell, or to whistle, or to blow a horn, there would not be, of course, any production of saliva; these stimuli are not sufficient. But if, at the same time

one shows the meat, one shows a certain color, or rings a bell, or whistles, or blows a horn, in time, the mere showing of the color, the ringing of a bell, etc., will, in the absence of the meat, cause saliva to appear. By association with a biologically adequate stimulus (the meat), impotent stimuli (color, bell, whistle, horn) gain the power to excite the salivary glands. These associated stimuli are called conditioned stimuli; the reactions, conditioned reactions or reflexes. Again, the animal is often said to be conditioned to the stimuli.

What is true of these animal reactions is, in general, applicable to human beings, and not only to physical responses but also to emotional responses. And, under certain conditions, there is scarcely any feature which has been associated with a complex situation sufficient to bring about an emotional response which may not, by itself, subsequently liberate the original emotion. In animals, associated stimuli usually become effective only after frequent repetition; this is not always true of human beings. If the emotional reaction is intense, comes as a shock or surprise, repetition may not be necessary. The same holds good of distressing experiences in childhood, when the mind is plastic and impression-

able; also in the nervous, and during periods of mental or physical fatigue or unrest.

Any number of examples might be given of fears due to conditioned reflexes, which fears may be constant or inconstant, mild or severe, depending upon how often the stimulus is encountered, and the state of the mental and physical health. We shall discuss some which are comparatively frequent.

A prominent fear, especially in childhood, is fear of the dark. As stated elsewhere, children naturally fear loud sounds, and it is probably to loud sounds heard in the dark that most fears of the dark are due. Thus, a child may be put to bed in a dark room. There occurs a loud sound. The latter may have been of unknown origin, or it may have been caused by the slamming of a door, the fall of a picture, the banging of a window-blind. There ensues a fear of the dark, and it may be of the objects which have produced the sounds, or of the parts of the room from which they came. The parents, as a rule, fail to understand the origin of the fear, and especially if the child fears objects, such as window-blinds, laugh at its "foolishness." Often the child is predisposed to fear of the dark by reason of the dangers supposed to be associated with darkness, its ideas being gath-

ered from stories of ghosts, bogies, from threats, and so on; consequently, slight stimuli are often sufficient to establish a marked fear. As we all know, many persons carry childhood fears of the dark into adult life. The fears of the objects which have prompted the fear are usually lost, but in many instances they continue in the form of aversions to the objects.

The fear of lightning is also common, and one which most people do not explain satisfactorily. Lightning brings to mind ideas of possible speedy and painful death, and by a dreaded agent—electricity. But this will not account for the fear in the very young, nor is the problem solved by bringing in racial inheritance, nor nervousness. Again, the fact that one's chances of being killed by lightning are 1 in 240,000, while everyday chances of death are much greater (20 times in the case of accident) shows that the fear is not very reasonable. It is probable that the fear is a conditioned one, and one in which many things have played parts. We might mention the loud sounds which accompany it (thunder), the darkness (especially when one has, or has had, a fear of the dark), being alone when a storm occurred, the fearful reactions of other persons, lightning striking in the neighborhood.

Fear of closed places is not rare. Like other fears, it may develop at any time of life and its exciting causes may be many. For example, a child has been stubborn, angry, and otherwise emotionally disturbed. In an effort to correct it, it is threatened with physical punishment; maybe it is punished. Finally, it is forcibly thrust into a dark cellar or room, told that rats will eat it up, etc. When its angry passion subsides there is a reaction of fear, and because the fear began in a closed place (a locked room), a fear of closed places ensues. The fear may gradually grow less intense and finally disappear; often it crops out in adult life, especially when mental and physical tone is poor. A like fear may result from an accidental enclosure, or from an inability to effect a quick exit from a dangerous situation, say from a house on fire. It may even follow an attack of shortness of breath. The difficult breathing suggests the need of air, the possibility of death from suffocation. This possibility remains in mind, and unconsciously leads the person to avoid closed places, and maybe to dread being alone, lest another attack occur.

Experiences which come as a shock frequently exert a marked influence in conditioning one to certain things. For instance, an unexpected

plunge into cold water, a fall out of a boat, a near-drowning accident, may so profoundly affect one that one dare not go near the water, swim, cross a bridge, get into a boat. A train, carriage, or other accident may promote a fear of the vehicle concerned. One may develop a fear of a certain locality where distress has been experienced. This point is well shown by animals; for instance, a horse frightened in a certain place will, for a long time afterwards, display fear when again in that locality. One may even become conditioned to a medicine; a man once took a physic which purged him so violently that the mere thought of the drug, years after, caused his bowels to move. And, of course, one can become conditioned to emotions other than fear. It is told of an old physician that he once passed a place where he saw a putrescent dog; the sight caused him to vomit. Years later, he chanced to pass this spot; he again vomited; the dog had entirely disappeared.

To illustrate an important point, let us be pardoned for giving two more examples:

A lady, of a nervous temperament, was shocked by a collision between two street cars. At the time the motormen rang their bells repeatedly. Here was a complex situation prob-

ably sufficient to arouse emotion. However, the emotion detached itself from the incident as a whole and centered itself on the bells; ever after, the lady had a phobia for bells, not only for street car bells, but for bells of all kinds, as church bells, alarm-clock bells, ambulance, police, and fire bells.

Another lady was pounced upon and scratched by a trusted white cat. Afterward cats, and the color white, filled her with dread; not only this, she feared furry animals in general, abhorred white articles of clothing, disliked to look into people's eyes (because of their whites).

These examples show that an emotion need not confine itself to the objects or situations which have first caused it, and that the original emotion may be roused by objects which resemble the old experience, even slightly. This explains why one experience may promote numerous fears which, apparently, are not related to one another; it also helps to account for the individuals' failure to understand the source of the fears.

To summarize the matter of unconscious fears of a conditioned reflex nature:

One has experienced the emotion of fear due to a complex situation probably sufficient to excite fear. However, the various factors which

have made up the situation have not been fully grasped, have not been reasoned out; consequently, it is not realized that the emotion, which properly belongs to the experience as a whole, has focused itself on but a certain element, and that this element, when again met with, arouses the original emotion. In other words, the experience as a whole is forgotten or is not evaluated sufficiently. Both the forgetting and the failure to comprehend the genesis of the fear are natural. Pascal is said to have remembered every single thing which happened during his life, but such memory powers are extraordinary indeed. Most of us forget so that we can remember—that is, were we to attempt to keep all our experiences conscious, we should have no time for the ordinary affairs of daily life; in fact, the task would be Sisyphean and impossible. Again, many incidents which give rise to fears occur in childhood when reasoning is poor and impressionability great; it is, also, a general trait to keep the painful out of mind, to repress or forget it. And since we cannot all be expert in mental mechanisms, and since we are not given to seeking the wherefore and the why of our reactions to various stimuli, it is no wonder that few of us correlate present dreads with past happenings.

It is worth mention that while the original experience is apparently forgotten, every detail of it is impressed upon the brain cells. Just how many of our experiences are conserved in the mind, it is impossible to determine. We do know that the retentive powers of the mind are greater than the productive or recalling powers; in fact, only about ten per cent of our past can be made conscious by ordinary methods of memory revival. There are many psychologists who believe, with De Quincey, that everything we have seen, tasted, smelled, felt, heard, thought, is indelibly imprinted upon the brain cells, and that under suitable conditions it may be elicited. At any rate, the details revealed in dreams, and by hypnotism and various psychological tests, lead us to conclude that much more is conserved than is commonly imagined; this applies not only to significant events but also to those which are of apparently slight importance.

Lest some readers be sceptical as to the power indifferent stimuli and forgotten experiences have in inciting emotional reactions, we might point out that there are any number of illustrations of this in the daily lives of all of us, however strong our nervous organizations. The lock of hair, the handkerchief, the flower,

or other object which has been associated with a loved person awakens the affection which properly belongs to the loved person, not to the inanimate object. A souvenir of a place where we have had a good time liberates pleasant memories. A mother's love is roused by her baby's shoes, a lock of hair, in spite of the fact that the "baby" is now a grown man with children of his own. Even things which in themselves are unpleasant, often generate agreeable feelings. A favorite example among psychologists is the "music" of the rook, or of the crow. The rook and the crow are by no means songbirds but they have been heard in childhood, in the springtime, in green fields, during vacation days, and because of their pleasurable associations they take on pleasurable qualities. The sight of a relative, even the name of one's enemy often generates the unpleasant feeling which rightly belongs to the enemy. And to show, by an actual case, that even such an indifferent thing as a dress may cause unpleasant emotion:

A young lady was strong in her dislike for a certain new dress; in fact, she said she hated it. When she purchased the dress it pleased her very much. It so happened that on the day she first wore it, she had a quarrel with her

beau; her beau disappointed her also in that he failed to comment favorably upon the dress. The dress had nothing to do with the quarrel, yet it became identified with it, and caused such disagreeable memories that the lady got rid of it.

In the above examples the persons are, as a rule, aware of the relation between the stimuli and the emotions they arouse. But there are as many, if not more, examples where the relation is hidden. We all know that we have marked and instantaneous dislikes for certain pictures, works of art (even of holy subjects), colors, voices, facial characteristics, but for no apparent good reason; we say, for instance, "I don't like his eyes," "I had an instinctive dislike for him," and if asked why, we say: "Oh, just because." We know, too, that we are often moved to anger, to laughter, to sadness by unimportant incidents and remarks which have no similar effect upon others. Were it possible for us to pierce the recesses of our minds, it would be discovered that these prejudices and emotional reactions are based on persons, places, and things which, in the dim past, have been in context with pleasure or pain, using the latter to include irritation, annoyance, and the like, and of which we are unconsciously reminded by the person or thing exciting our emotion. The

reactions may even be prompted by ideas; thus, we may have read that eyes of a certain color, certain types of chins, or handshakes are indicative of certain character traits, and when we meet a person who stimulates these ideas we are likely to form snapshot judgments about him, which judgments are not always true nor easily altered owing to the preformed bias. Our minds are very primitive, very much like the Indians'; they never forget a joy or a sorrow, nor a possible source of such, and, unknown to us, prompt us to react favorably or unfavorably to all persons or things that, even to a slight degree, resemble past experiences of pleasure or pain.

3

Many unconscious fears are attributed to "accidental associations." Though these fears can be explained by the conditioned reflex, it may afford some further insight into the subject if we consider them as entities.

In these cases the individuals—who are almost invariably neurotic and therefore quick to fear and to generalize on single experiences—are troubled by a distressing thought which suddenly comes to mind. Generally, the idea is not excited by an external object, but by a physical or mental instigator. It may be of

a fearful nature, and accompanied by physical signs, as agitation, palpitation of the heart, diarrhea, weakness in the legs. Or it may be tinged with disgust, with which nausea, vomiting, uneasiness in the stomach, faintness are frequently associated.

The exact nature of the idea is variable. It may be, for instance, a thought of failure, of insanity, of lost love, of accident, of ridicule. Often, though not necessarily, it is an idea which has been repressed. It may thus be a thought of sex, which is fearful to some, disgustful to others. Or disgust may be incited by the thought of a certain food, of a loathsome sight, of a repulsive person, of a circumstance which has caused shame. In disgust the physical manifestations are likely to be more evident if at the time of the thought the person is fatigued, has headache, or stomach uneasiness.

The fact that it is an idea which has brought about the physical changes is not appreciated by the person. This may be because the thought was so fleeting that the relation between the two could not be grasped; or the physical reactions may have been pronounced and usurped the attention; or the person may not have cared to recall the idea because of its disagreeable content. All that he is conscious of is that he has

become greatly upset physically and mentally, especially the former. He seeks some cause for this; the causes he may assign are numberless, and there are none too infinitesimal and none too illogical.

To give a few examples: A lady, while in a train, is agitated by the thought that she has forgotten to lock the door of her house. She faints. The attention she receives and her physical discomfort serve to banish from her mind the idea which has been the real cause of her trouble; she is cognizant only of the fact that she became sick in a train. She concludes that the train is at fault, that in some way it made her ill. She develops a fear of trains, and it may be of street cars which, to some extent, resemble trains.

A man, undergoing mental stress because of business difficulties, is terror-stricken by the sudden idea that his business will collapse, and that he and his family will be in want and disgraced. At the time he is crossing a street. He trembles, becomes weak in the legs, rushes back to the sidewalk. Once more the true cause of the physical symptoms is not realized; the street itself is blamed, but for no good reason. There ensues a fear of crossing streets, or of open places; if the man should attempt to cross a

street the same physical reactions as originally occurred manifest themselves. Here we might mention that when an idea causes pronounced physical changes, the same changes tend to recur when the same idea or anything related to it is entertained. This is also true if a physical disturbance comes before a fearful idea; for instance, if an attack of palpitation of the heart generates the thought of sudden death, and great emotion, subsequent attacks are likely to liberate the emotion, even though the idea (of sudden death) is forgotten or repressed.

One further illustration of the ways in which "absurd" fears may be formed, in this case as the result of physical distress, and not of an idea solely:

A young lady heard the telephone bell ring. Her mother called to her, saying that a young man, with whom the lady was keeping company, wished to speak to her. At the time the young lady felt nauseated; the announcement, which came something like a shock, caused her to vomit. For a long time afterwards, whenever the lady was told that this man wanted to speak to her on the telephone, she vomited. A circumstance like this might easily lead to a marked fear of telephones, which, fortunately, did not occur.

4

As we all know, it is natural to repress painful thoughts; and most normal persons are able to do so without apparent detriment. But especially in nervous subjects the ability to repress may be weak or absent, probably because the painful idea is stimulated constantly, or because it is strong in itself, or stronger than the person's will power. Consequently, distressing ideas easily thrust themselves into consciousness. If, however, a substitute thought can be found, which thought is symbolic of, or related to, the painful thought, the repression of the latter is aided; and though a certain amount of anxiety is present, it is not so acute nor so severe. This is because the substitute idea drains off some of the energy generated by the idea it represents; or, more simply, because it gives one something to think about. And with the mind busy in one direction other ideas are kept back; attention can be given to but one thing at a time. By constant substitution it is possible so to repress an obnoxious thought that it never intrudes into consciousness, save in occasional dreams. Indeed, the thought may be forgotten entirely in so far as ordinary recall is concerned.

In common physical complaints there are any number of illustrations of one idea standing for another. Thus, a man is greatly upset and fearful because of a headache which refuses to respond to the usual treatment, and for which no organic cause can be discovered. The real cause of the headache, at least for its continuance and severity, is the fear of insanity. In some way this man has come to believe that headache is a forerunner of insanity; it may be that a relative was insane and he thinks that his brain is hereditarily weak. He does not like the thought of insanity, so he focuses his attention on the headache, the less painful of the two thoughts.

Other examples: A patient complains of chronic dizziness, which he thinks of in preference to brain tumor; to him dizziness is a sign of brain tumor. Another thinks of pain in the arm and leg instead of the paralytic stroke he fears. Another thinks of backache instead of kidney disease. Another of spots before the eyes instead of future blindness. Another dwells upon pain in the right side rather than on the thought of appendicitis. Another thinks of pain in the left side of the chest; behind this there is the fear of heart disease; behind this, the fear of sudden death,

which may lead the person to fear to be alone lest he be in need of help, or to cross a street lest he have a sinking spell and be run over. Fears based on physical ailments may be very complicated, and there is hardly any symptom which may not be used to cloak a buried dread.

Acute and chronic anxieties generated by disturbing life conditions in general often promote physical impairments which, in turn, become sources of fear. Since the affected persons, though aware of the original anxieties, do not realize that these are responsible for the physical fears, the latter may also be regarded as unconscious fears. To the physical alterations the persons give most if not all of their attention, largely because the physical troubles are less painful to think about than the mental thorns which have given birth to them. Believing that something is radically wrong with their bodies, they go to the physician in quest of relief of the symptoms; they do not complain of their other worries. One man, for instance, complains of a pain in the right side of his chest; after considerable questioning, it is found that the pain occurs only when certain painful thoughts enter his mind. It is often very difficult to get these patients to comprehend the relation between the two sets of fears; indeed,

they often deny that they have worries of any nature, sometimes because they are ashamed to admit worry, at other times because worry has a different meaning to them than it has to the physician. Some patients absolutely refuse to reveal the true cause of their troubles; they feel unequal even to thinking about it, or they believe themselves utterly unable to cope with the problem, which may be, apparently, irremovable.

5

As to the methods by which unconscious fears are dispelled:

It should be obvious that medicines, surgical measures, massage, travel, and similar forms of therapy are of no use in this connection. An idea cannot be dissolved by a medicine, nor can it be cut out nor rubbed out. Nor is travel effective, though in some cases where the fear is due to, or aggravated by, some factor in the environment, it may be of some value; however, there tends to be a relapse on return to the usual mode of life; again, we carry our minds, and our thoughts, with us wherever we go.

At times, suggestion, logic, the building up of inhibitions or new points of view toward the fears are of some value, especially in those who are too young or too impoverished intellect-

ually to grasp the genesis, and the way out, of their troubles. But whenever possible it is best that all the factors concerned in the development of the fears he brought into the full light of consciousness. When this is done the person has an explanation for his fears; he finds that they are not imaginary, that they have a cause; he can examine them, and is better able to control them. One who suffers from an unconscious fear is comparable to a man who is told, just after he returns from lunch, that the boss wishes to see him at closing time. If the man is of a worrisome type he will be beset by all kinds of fearful ideas—he may be discharged, demoted, given a "call down"; he may have committed a serious error, etc. The more he thinks about the possibilities the more agitated he becomes; even the mention of the boss, the thought of him, the sight of his office, his stenographer—in short, anything associated with the boss stimulates fear, but the true cause of the fear is not known. Once the man talks to his employer the fear departs; there may have been no good reason for the fear, or a very slight reason, or in any event the man now knows what he is "up against," and so is able to find a way out.

Sometimes the discovery of the basic incitants

of the fears is easy. All physicians of large experience in the treatment of nervous patients realize that many people interpret slight physical disturbances for the worst, that emotional unrest due to the problems of life upset body and mind, and that few people are aware of, or give full value to, the interrelation between the affective states and their health. He is very prone to suspect a hidden mental problem when the patient complains of a functional malady which fails to respond to the usual remedies. And by means of a few tactful questions he is generally able to bring the difficulty to light. If the fear has no substantial foundation, say the fear of tuberculosis because of a simple habit cough, the patient is at once relieved. Even though the fear is of another kind, as the fear of failure, the person is better prepared to adjust himself to his problem because he now understands himself, and realizes that his mental unrest has been responsible for his physical errors. This understanding, in addition to philosophical and constructive advice suited to the needs of each patient, is, as a rule, sufficient to restore equanimity.

Often special psychological devices must be employed in order to reveal the experiences which have generated the fears. Several meth-

ods have been made use of, but probably the most popular is the so-called method of free association. When this is utilized, the patient is placed in a comfortable position in a quiet room. He is asked to relax himself physically and mentally, and to think of something which is related to the experience, such as his fears, or his physical complaints; many physicians have the patient think of one of his dreams, for when one is mentally troubled the dream is likely to concern itself with the cause of the trouble, though in a symbolic way. He is then asked to utter all thoughts that come to him, without any effort to check them because of their absurdity, their irrelevancy, their seeming impropriety, and so on. One idea leads to an associated idea, so that eventually the fundamental experience which has provoked the fear is exposed. This method may seem to be very simple, yet it is very effective; indeed, by it one can uncover incidents which happened in early childhood, and exactly as they happened, without the slightest detail missing.

The origin of the fears may be found by this method in a very short time, but prolonged investigation may be necessary. There are many reasons for the latter. For one thing, some persons look upon mental analysis with dis-

trust, as a superfluity; they are so accustomed to a prescription that they think a pill or a potion is all they require; the difficulty is to find the right doctor and the right prescription. Others, and quite naturally, do not relish an inquiry into their mental life; it is all right to examine their bodies, their hearts for instance, but their thoughts they do not wish anyone to know. Still others have to learn to place their minds at ease, to allow their thoughts to flow freely and without check. But probably the greatest cause of delay is the mental depth of the experiences; the latter occurred so long ago, probably, that they are covered over by numerous, newer memories. In such a case the patient's symptoms are not unlike spots of oil on the surface of the ground. We know that the spots indicate a source below, but to discover this source requires much hard digging, which, of course, takes time.

When the basic experiences are finally found, the fears depart, as if magically. This is because we can now understand how the fears were brought about, and consequently we can make better use of our reasoning powers in overcoming responses which, probably, were developed in the organism as protective devices long before the higher mental faculties became

well established. As before stated, we are all unconsciously influenced by experiences of the past, the nervous more so than others; in other words, we are guided by emotions and impressions rather than by logic. And until we are fully aware of the true origins of our beliefs and acts, the latter tend to be faulty and more disadvantageous than helpful. For example, a man may have a strong dislike for a fellow who has the power to be of aid to him in various ways. Many reasons may be given for the dislike, but the only valid reason may be the fact that the acquaintance has a physical characteristic or a mannerism which reminds the other, unconsciously, of someone who in the past has caused displeasure. Were the prejudiced one to know this, it is probable that he would consider his attitude unjust and unreasonable, and would no longer be controlled by it. Similarly, a person who realized that his fears were due to past events, and to but insignificant parts of these events, would be likely to concede that the fears were unjustifiable, and would cast them aside. Knowledge is power, and in the realm of unconscious fears the truth and the value of the axiom are well shown.

CHAPTER V

COMPULSIONS AND DOUBTS

Irresistible Ideas and Acts—Chronic Indecision—Removal of Compulsions and Doubts —Prevention

1

A VERY interesting, though painful, form of nervousness is the so-called compulsion neurosis. While we have termed the malady a form of nervousness, let it be understood that along with phobias, doubts, and "worries," it is primarily a disturbance of the mind. Nervousness is a label which has little or no meaning medically; it is used colloquially for everything from unmistakable insanity to sheer cussedness. To the layman it usually signifies that the nerves are sick, or damaged in some way. There are actual diseases of the nerves, as in locomotor ataxia, but in nine cases out of ten where nervousness is said to be present, there is nothing the matter with the nerves themselves. Yet we go on year after year, preferring to believe that our nerves are at fault, erroneously convinced

that mental trouble is synonymous with, or the precursor of, insanity, and needlessly fearful of the latter. Nothing is gained by putting on blinders to the truth; indeed, this merely prolongs our sufferings, and causes us to swallow quarts of medicines which, as far as our fears are concerned, might just as well be thrown down the sink.

A victim of the compulsions is forced apparently to entertain unwelcome ideas or to carry out undesired performances. For instance, he must think of certain melodies, of certain odors, of indecent subjects; or recall names he has forgotten; or cogitate on why the earth is round, why microbes exist, why there is a God, why Judas was damned, and so on. No exercise of the will seems to rout the ideas, and, in the case of queries, no amount of thought or investigation produces satisfaction. The resultant state is one of severe unrest; not only because the absurd thoughts persist, but also because the nature of the ideas and the inability to banish them lead the sufferer to conclude that he is losing control over his mind, that insanity is inevitable.

In most instances, probably, the ideas call for action. This is natural since most ideas tend to express themselves in appropriate physical

responses. The actions are such, however, as the person does not wish to perform; they are ridiculous, unnecessary, or objectionable in other ways. An effort is made to put the ideas out of mind, to suppress them, but they continue to intrude and to occupy attention. A conflict results: One part of the mind demands that the idea be obeyed, the other part says no. During the conflict there is usually anxiety, manifested by irritability, a sense of impending evil, palpitation of the heart, hurried breathing. Generally, the command is so insistent that it is submitted to, after which there ensues a period of relief. The latter is only temporary, for the ideas soon recur, with a return of the conflict. No cause can be assigned by the sufferers for the ideas, nor for the feeling that harm will befall them unless they obey. Should anyone attempt to prevent them from carrying out the performances, they become much alarmed.

The nature of the compulsive acts varies. As a rule there is only one marked compulsion in each case, though there may be many. The compulsions may be routine and chronic, or they may appear only at such times as mental or physical equilibrium is disturbed.

There is hardly any idea which suggests action that may not be made the basis of a com-

pulsion. Some compulsions are more common than others. Thus, some persons are compelled to count—the objects seen in a room, on a table, in a store window, the words on a page, the number of times a certain letter occurs on a page. Victor Hugo always counted the number of carriages in a procession. Zola counted the gas jets in the street, the numbers on doors and on cabs. The First Napoleon counted, when going through a street, the rows of windows and added them. Others, like Samuel Johnson, touch every post they pass, or go in and out of a house or passage with a certain foot first; should they fail to touch a post, or think that they have missed one, they are distracted and must return to touch it. Some must read every sign they see; or ask the names of strangers; or go through various ceremonials before going to bed, such as arranging their clothing just so, turning around so many times, sprinkling the bed with holy water. More serious are the compulsions to steal, to commit arson, to expose the genitals, to maltreat animals and humans, to become intoxicated.

It is worthy of note that in the vast majority of cases the compulsions are simple and innocent. The affected persons have good intelligence, good insight into the irrational nature of

their malady, and possess good morals; as in hypnotic suggestion, they can not be induced to perform acts contrary to ethics. Anxious to prevent their failing from becoming known to others they may, however, resort to white lies and to other minor forms of duplicity. The grossly antisocial compulsions, while sometimes found as transient accompaniments of the instabilities of puberty and adolescence, are most frequent among moral perverts, the insane, the feeble-minded, and the epileptic; as stated, such actions are not typical of the usual sufferers from compulsions.

An important point is that in many cases of alleged compulsions no compulsions exist. The persons find that certain unwelcome ideas come to their minds frequently, and they fear that they may lose control of themselves or become insane, and then be unable to resist the ideas. They have no desire to perform the acts; in fact, they fight against the suggestions. What is present is a fear, not a compulsion. Thus, many say that they feel compelled to yell, to slap people, to utter obscene words, to kill their loved ones, to throw themselves out of a window, but they rarely do so.

As with phobias, compulsions are usually dependent upon a neuropathic disposition, and are

generated by such factors as we have considered in Chapter III. Apart from indicating an unstable nervous system, they denote feebleness of will, or as Dr. Francis Dercum puts it, deficient inhibition. To all persons come objectionable ideas, but most normal persons reject them and are no longer troubled by them. The neurotic is apparently unable to cast them aside, the ideas having become stronger than his repressive or will power.

While it is easy to describe the soil in which the compulsions take root, it is not always easy to describe the make-up of particular compulsions. Some compulsions can be shown to be related to, or symbolic of, acts or experiences which have occupied a prominent place in the past psychic life of the individuals; others, as the compulsions concerned with numbers, are colored by superstitions; others are revivals or aggravations of comparatively simple habits; still others are due to suggestion or are motivated by a hidden desire of one kind or another. To illustrate the latter, and also the types of persons usually affected:

A certain man, of neurotic antecedents, was from boyhood frail, easily fatigued, and unduly conscious of his physical inferiority. His home training was very strict; his duty to his parents,

the debt he owed them, were frequently emphasized, and he was threatened, ridiculed, and punished, though not physically, whenever he showed the slightest inclination to disobey their wishes. At school, the fear of God was daily inculcated. Consequently, he became abnormally shy, retiring, sensitive, quiet. Scrupulousness in religious and in other matters was very pronounced; he weighed every contemplated act as to its possible sinfulness, and rarely could he come to a decision. The ordinary events of daily life were filled with countless possible evils; he feared to play baseball lest he strike out, or make an error, and be ridiculed; if he carried a bundle out of a store he thought that someone would think he had stolen it; the swallowing of an apple seed brought ideas of appendicitis; he worried lest his remarks be misinterpreted; and so on.

In addition to numerous doubts he had many compulsions, most of which were transient. Among them were the compulsions to count white horses seen on the street, to step over cracks in the sidewalk, to place the right foot first on getting out of bed and on leaving the house, to take long steps in walking. These were of a purely suggested nature. From his youthful companions he learned that it was lucky to count white horses, and for some equally un-

known reason it was unlucky to step on cracks in the sidewalk, or to start the day with the left foot first; the latter idea is a fairly common superstition. The compulsion to take long steps was prompted by the notion that he would live longer by so doing; his religious instructors had told him that one's steps were numbered, and childishly he reasoned that the fewer and the longer one's steps the better.

A very pronounced compulsion which began about the age of fifteen and which lasted for many years was the compulsion to examine everything seen on the street, which might be a purse, a coin, or a greenback. Wishing to rid himself of this unwelcome habit, and conscious of the hold it had upon him, he often purposely passed by possible purses, but before he had gone many blocks his mind became so distressed that he was forced to return. Then came relief, following which, so that he would not be further tempted, he often kept his eyes above the street level until he got home. As might be expected, he was forced to many subterfuges to prevent his peculiarity from attracting attention.

Some psychologists would attach a special significance to a money compulsion, but for reasons which we need not enter into here, we believe

that a simple explanation will suffice for this particular compulsion. The boy had been imbued with the necessity of thrift, and had received many home illustrations. Moreover, he was practically forced to work in spare hours; the work fatigued him, and denied him the leisure and simple pleasures for which he yearned. If he had money drudgery could be escaped; he could gratify his ambitions, enter callings which he liked, fulfill his duty to his parents, and prevent their objections to his "laziness." He could not, of course, expect to find money sufficient for all this, yet the hope, whetted by tales of persons finding valuables in the streets, and the fact that he had found small sums, motivated the compulsion. It might be mentioned that this compulsion was overcome by an understanding of the facts in the case and by exercise of will.

Sometimes the compulsions have a sexual background, using the term sex in a very wide sense. A few simple examples:

A boy who has been shielded from sex knowledge gains certain sexual ideas from an acquaintance who is a scamp, given to "bunking" from school, to remaining out all night, to running away from home. A conflict is generated in the boy's mind—that is, the old ideas of sex and the

new ideas antagonize one another. An association is formed between the sexual ideas, the lad who imparted them, and the latter's remaining away from school, staying out at night, and running away. When the sexual thoughts come to the boy's mind, the image of the person responsible for them comes also, and the boy has an impulse to imitate him—that is, to play hookey, to stay out at night, or to run away from home. Of course, the boy does not know the reason for his behavior; he just gets a sudden impulse to do certain things and obeys it.

A scrupulous person finds sexual thoughts coming to mind, probably because of a natural, though repressed, desire to have an understanding of sex, or because of some mild physical stimulation. The thoughts are put away, yet they insistently recur; it may be that every object seen suggests something sexual. Or it may be that a sexual thought creates a feeling of disgust, contamination, uncleanliness. This feeling spreads; there follows a feeling of physical uncleanliness, as if the soiled soul soiled the body. There may result various actions—as excessive spitting (which represents an effort to get rid of the inner uncleanliness, just as one spits to remove a bad taste); very frequent washing of the body, or the clothing (washing is, of course,

symbolic of soul-cleansing); and so on. As in practically all similar cases, the origin of the actions is not appreciated by the person. We wish to impress upon the reader that the same acts may arise independently of sex; one should not, therefore, presume to interpret them.

2

Another form of disturbance of the will is the doubting folly (*folie du doute*). This is characterized by chronic, painful indecision or uncertainty, particularly over trivial matters.

The uncertainties that may harass a victim of morbid doubt are many inded. As a rule there are a number of doubts in each case, though the indecision may be marked in certain directions. Sometimes the persons are perplexed as to whether there is a God or a Hell, whether they have committed a sin or neglected to confess one. Those of a hypochondriacal tendency are often tormented by thoughts that they may not have evacuated sufficiently, that they have not chewed their food well enough, that they may have swallowed germs. Some leave the house but are troubled lest they have not locked the door, closed the windows, put out the fire; sometimes the perplexity is so great that they must return to make sure; even then the same

doubts may recur. A business man writes a letter, but must go over it again and again, lest he has omitted his signature, misspelled a word, forgotten to insert the date; and the more he studies it the more certain he is that something is wrong. Another consumes hours in deciding which cravat to wear, or which shoe to put on first.

In extreme cases there is no idea so absurd that it can not become a source of doubt; one lady, for example, became so uncertain as to whether her dead husband was resting comfortably that she had him reburied three or more times. Some persons doubt their existence, the existence of the world, the evidence of the senses.

Physical doubts often coexist with intellectual doubts. Thus, there is doubt as to the ability to walk, to talk, to write, to climb stairs, to rise from a chair, etc. These doubts usually represent spreading of the intellectual doubts, for with doubt well-established one is likely to doubt almost everything.

Doubt is present to some extent in all nervous persons. When it is marked, it is usually because of an especially faulty child-training. We shall find on investigation that the doubters have been reared very strictly, have been domi-

nated by their instructors and made subservient to their wills, have been made to feel their dependency upon the home, and have been unduly impressed with the idea of their inferiority and unworthiness. As a result they reach adult life with little will power, little decision; they are oversensitive, scrupulous, fearful when they are right and fearful when they are wrong. Some of those predisposed to doubt are always doubting; others manifest doubt only when their physical or mental health is below par.

It may be a matter of opinion as to whether it is worth-while to seek out the origins and make-ups of particular doubts. However, it can often be shown that the tendency to doubt had its impetus in something seen, heard, done, or thought about, which, by reason of its forbidden nature, caused a feeling of having done wrong; the later scrupulosity is an overreaction to this. Sometimes, too, it can be discovered that doubts, such as the doubt as to the existence of a God or Hell, have as their motivations the hidden wish that there be none; in the latter event, one need not worry about past transgressions, or it may give one more liberty of action than one's scruples now permit.

3

The prognosis of the compulsions and doubts depends upon the constitutional make-up of the person affected, the cause of the disturbance, and the latter's duration. Some persons are more amenable to treatment than are others, not only because they possess sounder nervous organizations, but also because they are eager to cooperate with the physician. In some cases the cause is comparatively simple and easily corrected; in others it is complex and requires close study. And, of course, the shorter the duration of the trouble the less tenacious its hold. Formerly, little encouragement was given to chronic sufferers, especially in compulsions, but by modern methods of medical psychology cure can be expected.

In general, cure entails a thorough understanding of one's psychic life so that the forces at work in promoting the turmoil may be revealed and corrected. Apart from this, there is usually a need of re-education, in a psychologic sense, so that the person may better understand himself, and better adjust himself to his difficulties; otherwise, the removal of one compulsion or doubt may be followed by a new one, especially when psycho-physical balance is again

disturbed. It is prudent, also, that effort be made to strengthen will power, for the reason that the ideas may, owing to their chronicity, reappear on slight provocation.

At times cure may be effected by rest in sanitariums, by persuasion, hypnotism, and other measures which do not seek to understand the individual. Again, some persons have cured themselves by resolute acts of will; for example, by refusing on one occasion to obey the compulsion or doubt, finding in this one conquest the power to disobey thereafter. In a like manner, many phobiacs have overcome their fears. Peter the Great, who always had gooseflesh, tremblings, and marked anxiety when crossing a bridge, due to a near-drowning accident in childhood, conquered his fear by throwing himself into the water. Accident has also been effective; thus, a man who had an intense fear of closed places was forced, for various reasons, to take a train; an accident occurred, which prevented him from making an egress; his anxiety became great, but it subsided after a time and he lost his dread.

The above-mentioned forms of therapy, while useful at times, are not very successful in long-standing cases, and since they do not solve the fundamental factors involved, there is always

danger of relapse. It is not often that a chronic sufferer can be urged to disobey a compulsion, and it is of little value to urge him to make use of his will power. And it is rarely, if ever, justifiable to place these persons, without their knowledge, under conditions which excite anxiety. The deception tends to make them antagonistic, and if an organic disorder is present, the fear paroxysm may be serious.

4

In passing, we might state that doubts and compulsions are, in minor ways at least, likely to trouble most nervous persons unless they guard against them. The preventives, and the cures are measures that strengthen the will. For example:

In everyday life there are many occasions when a decision is called for, and usually on matters which are not of very great importance. It may be a question of purchasing a certain article or of disposing of another; of what suit to wear; of accepting an invitation; of getting rid of old books; of where to spend the vacation; of what theater to attend; of what to have for dinner; and so on. Doubtless, there are times when it is necessary to give these things thought; but if we habitually hem and haw,

vacillate for hours, "just can't" make up our minds, have to say, "I'll let you know later," our wills are being made very elastic. Should this undesirable trait rule us, it is best to begin at once to correct it—by making a decision as soon as a question arises, without seeking precedents or reassurances, or asking for time to think the matter over, and without thinking about it after having made a decision. Sometimes we shall be wrong, but who does not make mistakes? If the majority of people were always right, there would be no erasers in lead pencils. One must take a chance, and it is far better to err now and then than to be a wishy-washy character influenced by every wind that blows, a prey of doubts which, since they weaken judgment and reasoning power, predispose one to the commission of very real faults.

Many of the nervous, women especially, are often beset by doubts after going to bed. For example, they wonder if the outside door has been locked, the kitchen light put out, the water turned off, the windows closed. It is wise to ignore these queries, particularly if they come frequently. Even if one can not sleep, this is preferable to being under the tyranny of vagrant, worrisome thoughts. One refusal to get up and verify the doubts, one fight to the finish

is likely to conquer them; whereas submission makes them more masterful.

There are a number of habits or customs which rule many people and which are not far removed from compulsions. Some persons can not tolerate a pin on the floor; they must pick it up. Others must wash their hands every time they handle an object, as money; they fear microbes or what not. A prominent author thinks that he can not write unless he uses a certain kind of paper; this reminds one of Haydn, the composer, who was convinced that he could not have a useful idea unless he wore a ring given to him by Frederick II. Many everyday folks must always have a certain place at table or at the theater; must smoke at certain times; must have a light burning in the sleeping room; must arrange their clothing just so on going to bed; must have their waste-baskets in a definite location. Others must kick from the sidewalk every small object they see; they believe that they are actuated by altruism solely, but the motive is selfish—a fear that someone may fall because of the object, and, in case they had not removed the object, the injury would be their fault.

The examples given—but a few of many—are simple things perhaps, but it is out of just such simple things that tenacious habits grow. Doubt-

less, we all know, by hearsay at any rate, of spinsters who look under the bed every night before they retire; they may get a thrill or two out of it at first, but unless they watch out they may wind up by looking for a concealed man in bureau drawers; such cases are known. All habits that are not helpful tend to be hurtful; and habits do not come upon us suddenly but by gradual stages. Unless undesirable habits are checked, they will dominate the mind, interfere with the normal freedom of the will, injure health and efficiency, and become obsessions. The man, for example, who is very particular that his sleeping-room window be open just so many inches, or who must arrange his clothing very definitely on going to bed, will, in time, find himself unable to sleep unless these conditions are met with to his satisfaction; he will appreciate the absurdity of the requirements, but he is the controlled, and not the controller of his acts. Another who must have his paper weight in a certain place will be unable to work if the weight is missing; or, should it be a few inches out of the way, unless he places it as he thinks it should be. Moreover, futile habits such as we have mentioned are very prolific; they give birth to others that are equally soundless, burdensome,

and harmful. The time to start unshackling oneself from them is now; each day they grow stronger and stronger, and the will grows weaker and weaker.

CHAPTER VI

THE FEAR OF ILLNESS

Nervous Physical Ailments—When and How to Consult the Physician—Attitude Toward Hygiene, Medical Advertisements, Medical Tests—Control of Misdirected Attention—Conquest of Nervousness, Insomnia, Indigestion, Constipation—Chronic Diseases

1

When one reflects that there are millions of retardable deaths each year, millions of sick-beds needlessly filled, and millions who are suffering from preventable impairments, all entailing great economic loss and untold pain, it should be conceded that a more general observance of the laws of personal hygiene is highly desirable. But it appears that those who should be most concerned are indifferent, whereas those who require admonition least are unduly solicitous about their health, especially their physical health. Indeed, not far from sixty per cent of the patients who frequent physicians' offices, and who complain of numerous physical ills said to be nervous, are victims of functional disorders, of troubles that

have no organic basis, which are simply reflections of misdirected attention or of disturbances originating outside the body itself. And in ten per cent or better where an actual disease exists, the symptoms are entirely due to the mental attitude toward the impairment, not to the disease.

It is folly to live in such dread of fire that one is always on the lookout for it, and constantly spraying one's possessions with preventives. So, also, in case a fire breaks out, one throws water only on the smoke. But in respect to bodily ailments, many persons adopt a practically similar course. They are habitually fearful that illness will overtake them, are always examining themselves to discover whether ills are present; and, as if to safeguard themselves, they resort to all kinds of preventives, especially those recommended by the proprietary medicine interests. When the body does show signs of disorder they are quick to conclude that there is something radically wrong with it; consequently, they subject it to supposedly curative measures which, in most cases, merely adds insult to injury. There are many reasons for this condition of things, but the chief reason is that most of us are prone to regard health in a physical sense only; we disregard the fact that mind and body reciprocate, that unpleasant emotional states have a very

pronounced influence upon our somatic welfare. And, as stated, in the majority of functional nervous troubles it is the mind and not the body which is primarily at fault.

To cure any evil it is necessary to remove its cause. Therefore, if a person is habitually concerned about his physical activities, or has physical ills which are purely nervous in character, relief will not obtain until the origin of trouble is discovered and removed. Just what is the cause in any given case is a matter for an expert to determine. It may be that boredom, insufficient occupation and recreation, and similar simple things are responsible for his discontent, and thereby leading him to be unduly self-centered. Or the introspectiveness may be due to irregular habits of life; or to the fact that during a period of physical or emotional stress he noted physical discomforts to which he gave great attention, which attention persists as a habit. It may be hate, bitterness, sorrow, regret, discouragement, failure, self-condemnation, home or business discord, a feeling of inadequacy, unsatisfied desires, which are upsetting his physical and mental equilibrium. Repugnant as it may be to us, the physical complaints may be used so that he can play the martyr, gain attention, sympathy, advantages; or they

may serve to justify his laziness, or his unwillingness to come into contact with life's difficulties.

2

Considering the varied etiology, it is prudent that those who are chronically worried about their bodies consult a competent physician. If one has been ailing long and has sought advice from a number of general practitioners without benefit, it may be wise to seek out a specialist in nervous diseases, even to have various parts of the body examined by specialists in particular organs. This is the shortest way to cure, and the cheapest in the long run. Again, it settles the question as to whether the body is really responsible for one's ailments.

When a person consults the physician, it is to his advantage that he go with an open mind, as if to a confessor. Often the physician meets patients who argue with him about the nature of the illness, who wish to prescribe for themselves, who are disappointed if they are given the plain facts rather than told that they have a malady with an aristocratic name, who are unwilling to carry out the remedial measures advised. Comparatively little can be done for them, and if they continue in the slough of

hypochondriacism they have only themselves to blame. There are others who become antagonistic, who feel that the physician is impertinent, should he inquire into their home life, their worries, their sex activities. Non-cooperation is poor policy, if for no other reason than that it prolongs the cure, even defeats it.

The patient should, then, resort to a skilled physician in whom he has confidence and trust in his judgment. Moreover, he should be frank, assured of the fact that the physician is well-acquainted with the trials of mind and body, and that he has a sympathetic and an understanding attitude toward them. If, therefore, the patient fears that his insomnia will end in insanity, or that his stomach trouble is a precursor of cancer, or that his palpitations of the heart signify early death, let him ask the question; if he does so he is likely to find that he has been brooding needlessly; if he does not he is certain to remain ill, since it is impossible to be healthy as long as secret griefs gnaw at the mind. Again, if he has home discord, business trouble, sexual problems, let him not be ashamed to confess them. All these disturbing factors have a marked effect upon him, and it is solely for this reason that they are inquired about.

3

From the physician much help can be expected, yet there is much that the patient can and must do for himself. This is especially true in case he is naturally of an apprehensive turn of mind; also, if he has been long concerned about his ailments, for habits of thought tend to persist, even though their exciting causes are removed.

Probably the first requisite is a sensible regard for the rules of personal health. These rules are very simple; they ask that we perform our daily acts properly, not improperly. They take up but little time; in fact, they should be automatic. They do not necessitate constant thought; under such a condition they do more harm than good, both because they foster anxiety, which has a depressing effect upon the physical performances, and because one who observes them scrupulously is inclined to heed the minor points and neglect the major. They should, therefore, be taken calmly, without stressing any rule in particular.

The second requirement is the avoidance of medical textbooks, medical magazines, and kindred literature. Very injurious to the apprehensive are the proprietary medicine advertise-

ments, most of which prey upon the universal desire for perfect health and the fear of disease, and whose appeals are enhanced by the mysterious composition of the nostrums recommended; did all nostrums have their ingredients printed on their labels, it is safe to say that most of them would be unwanted. To them many cases of hypochondriacism can be traced. That the claims made are often directly and inferentially misleading is apparent to all medical men. For example, the writer has before him the advertisement of a throat tablet, said to be very germicidal but really of feeble bactericidal power, which we are advised to take when in crowded street cars, when sitting in stuffy offices, in fact, the oftener the better. Another advertisement tells us how to prevent and cure appendicitis; the agent recommended is nothing more than a laxative, but, of course, the reader does not know this. Another tells us how to get along without glasses, how to cure eye diseases; the stuff advised is essentially boric acid solution, which can be made at a cost of fifteen cents a gallon. As for testimonials, no one who makes good use of common sense pays much attention to them, even though the encomiums are given by well-known pugilists, actors, musicians, business men. The fact that a man is successful in the world of

business, sport, politics, science in general, does not make his views on medicine authoritative. Nor does the word Doctor mean much nowadays; indeed, the title is used by physical culturists, teachers, clergymen, chiropractors, chiropodists among many others. If one wishes to know just what representative medical authorities think of certain advertised medicines, instead of accepting the advertisers' statements that doctors vouch for the nostrums, one might inquire of the American Medical Association, Chicago.

The potential and actual evils of proprietary, medicine advertisements are so great that we can not refrain from stating that all of us, even though in good health, would profit by eschewing them altogether. We may believe that we are immune to the suggestions contained therein, but few of us really are. There is nothing about which we are more apprehensive than our health; and we are most gullible and fearful about that of which we know little. Further, when we read the advertisements often, they are certain to leave impressions; indeed, repeat anything often enough, especially in print, and in time it will be accepted as fact. And these impressions are not without influence. We gain the idea, for example, that we suffer from want

of iron, from lack of vitamines, from insufficiency of the ductless glands, or that the taking of products containing iron, vitamines, glands will increase our well-being; consequently, we are tempted to buy the agents recommended, seeking to purchase health and efficiency in pills rather than to obtain them by right living. We read that certain symptoms are significant of serious ailments, and are prompted to investigate their presence in ourselves. Should we have the symptoms, or think we have them, it is probable that we become greatly alarmed and rush to the drug store; the same holds good in case the symptoms are not experienced until later. It may happen that we become greatly disturbed because of a certain symptom, but without knowing why; we have forgotten the source of the alleged harmfulness of it (the medical advertisement), but we feel that it is very serious.

As to newspaper articles, carried as news, pertaining to medicine: The newspaper is always on the lookout for the novel, the peculiar, the sensational. Consequently, oddities of medicine, spectacular cures, especially of supposedly incurable maladies, by spectacular methods, the medical opinions of prominent persons, even of medical men looking for free "puffs," are fea-

tured, and are not only accepted as absolute fact, but given serious consideration in the ratio of the space allotted to them. Again, newspaper descriptions and comments on medical subjects are not always accurate; in fact, not less than half of them contain error, not purposefully, of course, but because the writers are not well versed in medicine. We read, for instance, that a prominent man's brain tumor was caused by insomnia; that another man's paralytic stroke was caused by chronic catarrh of the stomach; that a famous writer of popular songs became insane, blind, and paralyzed because of worry; that diabetes is a disease of the kidneys. Not only are such statements disputed by physicians, but they lead many people who have insomnia, who have stomach trouble, who worry, who have kidney trouble, to excessive brooding. The best practical remedy for this state of things, and not only so that the public may be given information and not misinformation, but also so as to prevent needless worry, futile hope, and ill afforded expenditure in trying out reputed cures, is for the newspaper press associations to have on their staffs competent medical censors. The next best is that individual newspapers submit their medical items, before publication, to a capable local critic.

Thirdly, a person should not apply to himself tests which, as a rule, can be made and interpreted properly only by a physician. To take our temperatures frequently, to count the pulse rate, to examine the tongue, the appearance of the excretions, to weigh oneself daily, to test various reflexes, to ascertain whether abnormal ingredients are in the urine is uncalled for and prejudicial. There is hardly a function of the body that may not be altered by emotion, and few who apply these tests routinely are free from emotion. For example, emotion can elevate the temperature, raise the blood pressure, increase the pulse rate with irregularity and missed beats, cause sugar to appear in the urine; it may, also, produce what seem to be heart murmurs, in addition to many other disorders which, to the amateur physician, seem to be of dire import. It might be well to bear in mind, too, that the law of averages plays a great rôle in regard to what is considered the normal. The "normal" blood pressure, the temperature, the pulse, the weight, the hours of sleep, the number of intestinal evacuations, have been ascertained by taking large numbers of people and striking an average; but the results by no means imply that a person is unhealthy or abnormal unless he corresponds with the figures given. As a

matter of fact, it is perfectly possible to have a blood pressure, temperature, pulse, and weight above or below the "normal," as well as to have an intestinal movement only once in every two days, and to sleep but five or six hours a day, and yet be vigorous and in no way endangered.

4

Occupying a prominent place in explaining many physical complaints is undue oversight of the body's performances. The person who employs himself in this unwise way—and most of the nervous do so—renders his sensibilities hyperacute, so that the activities of the organs, and trifling discomforts of which he should be unaware, make profound impressions upon him. He feels, for instance, the beats of the heart, the circulation of the blood in various blood vessels, the weight of the food eaten, the motions of the stomach (sensations of tightness and relaxation). Slight sounds aggravate him, unwelcome odors and tastes not appreciable to others annoy him; there are discomforts in the skin, in the internal organs—in short, there is practically no organic function of which he can not become conscious, and no sensation that can not be magnified out of all proportion. And since a person of this type is fearful, he readily

interprets every deviation from what he considers the normal as of serious significance, so that really trivial matters generate acute and chronic anxiety.

A truth that needs to be impressed upon very many of us is, that most of the body's mechanisms should be carried out unknown to us; we should not be cognizant of them; they should not make impressions upon consciousness. We should not, for instance, be aware of the workings of the heart; and, like Chevreul who, when one hundred years old, was asked if he had always enjoyed good digestion, we should be able to say, "I can not tell, for I have never noticed." Were organic activities intended for conscious control and attention, we would have the power to regulate them, but we find that they have been placed outside the province of the will, being governed by automatic, subconscious mechanisms. We can not, for example, govern the movements of the stomach, the beats of the heart, the secretions of the kidneys, the workings of the liver. We can, however, so extend the field of consciousness that we become aware of their actions, no matter how slight, which power is more of a hindrance than a help to them, and more of an impediment than an adjuvant to our peace of mind.

In disease the matter is different, for then stimuli reach consciousness with sufficient force to command attention. But in very many of the nervous it is not actual disease which directs their thoughts to certain areas, and which is responsible for their complaints, but unreasonable oversight of the body. Were any person to dispute the statement that undue attention promotes discomfort, he might easily find verification by focusing his thoughts, say for five minutes, on a certain part of his body; by doing so, he will note any number of sensations not previously appreciated.

The moral is, that the nervous direct their attention away from their bodies. This requires time and patience, but it is perfectly possible. One should not say, "I will try to do so," but, "I will do so"; the former expression signifies half-heartedness and expectation of failure. In spite of everything a person will find himself dwelling upon the physical, because the thought habits are strong and thrust themselves into mind easily. They should be ostracized the moment one is aware of their presence; with each check they grow more weak and more conquerable.

A person may ask: What means shall I employ to divert attention? No dogmatic answer

can be given, at least none that would apply to all cases. As an aid we advise the cultivation of a more reasonable attitude toward such ills as are present—that is, if one has been assured that the ills are purely nervous, one might frequently recall the thought that these maladies are not at all serious; this helps to rout concern. One might, also, think of the fact that anxiety is a disturbing emotion and impedes organic functions; this will help one to avoid anxiety. Or one might develop a hobby; or read daily an essay, say from Montaigne or Bacon, and meditate upon it instead of upon one's ailments.

Particularly valuable is the restraint of all temptations to converse about our troubles. One way to become sick is to talk of sickness; one way to become well is to talk of health. If we think that our acquaintances are sincerely interested in our misfortunes we are mistaken; and if we guide ourselves by their counsels, and heed their diagnoses and prognoses, we are in for much mental unrest. Instead, then, of taking the everyday greeting, "How are you?" as demanding a literal and an exhaustive reply, and thereby making ourselves as popular as Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, let us reply briefly, optimistically. Certainly, there is not much hope for improvement if we both think and

talk of our trials; this is pernicious auto-suggestion, and renders our woes more gigantic in appearance and in actuality.

5

Those who learn to direct the thoughts away from the body will gain self-control. But as a further aid in this direction we might point out the desirable viewpoint toward some common disturbances which often cause anxiety. For instance, nervous palpitation of the heart, tremblings, nervous shortness of breath.

These errors may have a source which requires medical oversight. But in many cases they are due to emotion alone, and in all cases they are aggravated by emotion. Consequently, they can sometimes be cured, and can always be improved, by checking emotion.

In place, then, of becoming alarmed should one of these attacks occur, a person should maintain mental quiet, convinced that the attack is not at all dangerous to life; no one dies of simple palpitation; death from simple shortness of breath is rare indeed, and trembling and nervous spells never cause death. By tranquillity of spirit, by looking upon the disturbance as something which is of no moment, as something which will soon pass, he will be surprised to

find the paroxysm shortened, and if the practice be kept up, the attacks may be checked at their beginning, even removed entirely. In some cases it may be more effectual to direct attention away from the affected area; for example, in palpitation of the heart, to practice deep breathing, endeavoring to breathe evenly, quietly, and fully. Relaxation of the muscles is also very quieting.

Again, self-control may be increased, if indirectly, by doing away with doubts as to the powers of oneself and of the abilities of the physical organs. The thought "I can't" should be replaced by the thought "I can." Ideas of failure invite failure; indeed, success in any direction is rarely possible when doubt dominates the personality. On the other hand, confidence is more than half the battle.

Of all doubts, in the realm of the physical at least, there are three which are especially prominent. These are the doubts as to the ability to sleep, to digest, and to evacuate. Here, also, a sane view of the matter is very desirable and helpful.

The belief is still current that sleeplessness leads to insanity, and that it seriously impairs one's physical and mental vigor; this is a fallacy. A few hours' sleep each night, combined

with rest in bed, the whole to total seven or eight hours, is amply sufficient for health. Of course, it is unpleasant to lie awake, but were the insomniac to rout his fear of insomnia, cease to fume and fret about his apparent inability to sleep, and were he to relax physically and mentally, it is safe to say that he could enjoy the slumber he craves. We cannot woo sleep by chasing it, nor if we are convinced that we and sleep are absolutely strangers. Sleep is attracted when we are indifferent to it, feeling that, even though we may not sleep, we will rest at least, and that this rest will suffice for our needs.

As with insomnia, indigestion may be caused by abnormal physical conditions or by faulty living habits which should have medical care. But in the majority of cases it is brought about by mental disquiet. The latter may proceed from worries in general, but it is frequently prompted by concern about the stomach itself. And since it has been demonstrated, both by experiments on animals and on humans, that worry checks gastric secretion and motility, it should be evident that cure is impossible unless the mind becomes tranquil.

Apart from medical advice suited to each case, the first admonition to the dyspeptic is that he cease thinking about his digestion, that he re-

frain from talking about it, and from constantly reminding himself of the stomach's alleged impotence. He would do well also to avoid books and articles on diet, else he is sure to gain many erroneous ideas concerning foodstuffs. There are scores of food cranks, and there is hardly any food which has not been indicted. Fruits have been frowned upon because of their acidity or their seeds; tomatoes for the same reasons; milk because it fosters biliousness; meat because it gives rise to uric acid; starch because it evolves gas, and so on *ad infinitum*. It is best to ignore these erroneous claims, and to eat liberally of such foods as are placed before one. Many dyspeptics are suffering from lack of sufficient food; they have gradually eliminated so many articles of diet that their general nutrition has become poor, which in turn causes weakness of the body as a whole and of the stomach in particular. Were they to partake of a mixed diet, casting out fear of the consequences, nutrition would gain; also their digestive power. If they have been on a very limited diet for a long time it is possible that liberal eating will cause some discomfort. This is natural, inasmuch as the stomach has grown feeble through lack of exercise. Were a person to make use of a skeletal muscle after a long period of inactivity, it would pain

him; the stomach is a muscle and follows the same laws. The discomforts will be only temporary, all the more so if one ignores them.

Quite as important as the above is the avoidance of digestants, especially as routine measures. Rarely are the ferments of the stomach absent in nervous dyspepsia; in fact, they are often increased. And he who takes tablets for "gas" is often deceived as to what occurs. Many, if not most, of these tablets contain alkalies, as baking soda, which in the presence of the acid of the stomach create gas; this may be tested by adding some soda to dilute acid in a test tube. Gas formation is a very slow process; it does not occur more speedily in the stomach than it does in the raising of bread. Dyspeptics claim, of course, that they expel large amounts of gas, but what they really expel is air. This air they swallow every time they belch; and they belch more than they are aware. The remedy is the restraint of the temptation to belch. By doing so, not only will digestion improve, but also other troubles, as deposits upon the tongue, bad taste in the mouth, bloatedness, nausea, intestinal noises, vomiting, all of which are often due to, or aggravated by, belching.

Constipation affects millions, but for its existence there is little good excuse. By simple

means, such as diets favoring fruits, green vegetables, cereals; by exercise, adequate water-drinking, regularity in visiting the toilet, aided if necessary by bran, or petrolatum, most cases can be removed. Good results are not sure to follow, however, if one is worried about constipation. The theory of autointoxication has been advocated so long that most people are greatly disturbed should they miss but one movement. But physicians take this seriously no longer; they certainly do not subscribe to the claim that constipation is the source of ninety per cent of all illness, that it generates diabetes, kidney disease, old age, hardening of the arteries, and what not. Constipation does cause discomfort, but this is brought about by the pressure of waste upon the lower bowel, plus fearful auto-suggestions. That the so-called symptoms of constipation are not due to poisons in the system is proved by the speediness with which the symptoms abate after a movement; if the symptoms were results of poisons they would last days, inasmuch as it would take days for the poisons to be eliminated. Again, all the symptoms of constipation can be produced by inserting a wad of cotton into the lower bowel.

Constipation is not to be encouraged; it does

detract from our comfort and well-being, but we should not believe that it fills us with poisons, shortens our lives, and damages us permanently in other ways. Concern like this adds to the severity of the impairment, both because worry inhibits intestinal movements, and because it contracts the small muscle guarding the outlet of the bowel. As stated, a life which favors the hygiene of the intestines is the surest and the safest remedy. If any rule of right living were to be stressed, it would be that of going to the toilet at a regular hour each day, regardless of whether a movement took place. A person should, at this time, cast out all fears that he can not effect an evacuation; else the fears will probably be realized. It is better to be convinced that a movement will occur, but if it does not he can rest content that it may occur tomorrow, and that a delay of a day or two will not prove harmful. Simple constipation is by no means a serious matter.

6

So far we have been referring to persons whose physical troubles are functional in origin. What are we to say to those who have actual organic maladies?

In the first place, we might urge them to

make sure, by means of a thorough examination, that an impairment is present. There are countless persons who go through life believing that certain organs or parts of their bodies are definitely diseased, or weakened, when this is not at all the case. Sometimes their ideas are due to mistaken notions about heredity, or to previous illnesses or injuries which have greatly impressed them. Or they may have been the victims of mistaken diagnoses; for instance, their livers or kidneys may have been palpable, and they may have been told that they have enlarged livers or floating kidneys. Again, during adolescence, or during a period of undernourishment or emotional unrest, they may have been found to have heart murmurs, pulse and blood pressure disturbances, sugar or albumen in the urine, which conditions were but transient and of no practical importance.

Should a person have a definite ailment, say enlargement of the heart, valvular disease, diabetes, arteriosclerosis, Bright's disease, he might have its nature and prognosis explained. In themselves, these troubles are not incompatible with a long life; they merely necessitate that he take better care of himself. As an old physician said, there is nothing which so aids longevity as the contraction of an incurable ill in

early life. It is difficult for many to reconcile themselves to the fact that they are not perfect physically, that they are organically inferior to others, but we must strive to be philosophical, stoical, mindful that everyone has a misfortune, and that hundreds of people have troubles much more serious and painful than our own. At any rate, there is every reason why tranquillity should be maintained. Unpleasant emotion upsets the body and aggravates the disease. And, as we have said before, there are many organic diseases which would produce no symptoms whatever were the affected persons less concerned about them.

CHAPTER VII

THE FEAR OF PUBLIC OPINION

Force of Public Opinion—Differentiation Between the Valuable and the Valueless—Reaction to Criticism—Developing Personality—Popularity

1

In every person there is the desire for the approval of his fellows, for popularity; also, a desire for self-approval. And to no small extent one's success and happiness are dependent upon how well these desires are satisfied. If, in the judgment of our fellows, we conduct ourselves in accordance with the written and unwritten laws of the group, we are given general esteem and aid, manifested in such ways as by friendship, patronage, positions, social invitations, appointment to office. If we offend the group, at least seriously, support is withdrawn, and we are punished in many ways, though not necessarily physically. True, we may be gross deceivers, and unworthily gain honors and riches; but even so, true peace and enjoyment can not

be known, for within us there is ever active the voice of conscience—religious or social—and the dissatisfaction that proceeds from the knowledge that the laurels are undeserved.

There are some who forget, or who ignore, the value of group-approval and of self-approval. A person, for example, startles society by some flagrant disregard of moral laws. For a period, he, or she, may bask in newspaper notoriety; possibly he may appear on the stage, as an attraction for the morbidly curious who wish to see what they might have been. The sickly, yellow flame of false popularity is soon extinguished, and the offender is left alone with his thoughts, banished from desirable social contacts, forgotten utterly. Another, a business man probably who has a monopoly of some kind, adopts a public-be-damned policy; when misfortune overtakes him, or a hardy rival appears, he learns too late the value of a good business name and of the public's good will. Another, who obtains favors from the public, such as political office, or livelihood upon the stage or screen, contends that the scandals of his private life are nobody's business but his own. Rightly or wrongly, he is brought before the bar of judgment which holds court in every mind, and is tried, condemned, and made to

atone, even by those whose inner lives may be no better than his life.

On the other hand, there are very many who place an exaggerated value upon what people may say and think of them. Some are so afraid of hurting others, of doing the wrong thing, of being censured, that they are constantly trying to satisfy everyone; they are, as a rule, the morbidly sensitive, the timid, the preys of doubts and fears. A far larger number, conscious of their inability to gain attention by merit, have as their motto: Anything to be noticed. There is no place like a large city, as New York, for observing to what devices people will resort in an effort to be recognized as people of culture, of distinction, of wealth, as "somebodies." On the avenue, for instance, may be seen many people dressed in riding togs, yet they never owned a horse or rode on one; it costs more nowadays to keep a horse than an automobile, don't-you-know. Others who carry "highbrow" books of which they know nothing; still others who "rave" about the opera although they detest it; others who talk familiarly and loudly of famous persons with whom they have never exchanged a word; others who pay to have a *maitre d'hotel* call them by name. But as many examples may be found in the small city, on

its own Main Street—those who affect the voice, dress, walk and other fatuities of persons who have struck them as paradigms of culture; those who spend all they have, and more, for show; those who accent words differently, who pretend to have very peculiar maladies, who exaggerate fashions, who wear gaudy clothes, who snap their fingers at waiters, who wear large diamonds. This group fools no one. The refined easily penetrate their camouflage, and secretly laugh at them. Their equals, even their inferiors, detect them also, and put them down as filled with self-conceit. And knowing that they are hypocrites, such fleeting notice as they receive, usually from strangers, fails to soothe, since the first and basic secret of all enduring satisfaction is: To thine own self be true.

2

The desire to be a social creature and to possess the good opinion of one's associates is, then, natural. To reject all public opinion as worthless, and to place oneself above it, as many pretend to do, is rash indeed; there are few who so act who do not come to grief. But while public opinion is, in itself, a powerful factor for one's good or ill, we must realize that all public opinion is not of equal weight; some of it is desirable

and useful, whereas some of it is the opposite. And it is the ability to differentiate between the two which is of great importance, especially in aiding us to be reasonably independent of public opinion, and in enabling us to determine the measures by which laudable public opinion may be gained.

The recognition of worthy public opinion should not be difficult. Our common sense should be sufficient, though sense is not so common after all. In general, we might single out the respected and successful men in our profession, in our community; it is their opinion which has weight, which, as a rule, is unbiased and sound. In another way, we might ascertain the reaction of the majority of our fellows toward us, for, under ordinary circumstances at least, the majority neither approve nor disapprove without just cause. Further, we might emphasize the opinion which is won by good work, which proceeds from those who know the value of our endeavors, rather than that which comes from vain display, from artifice and meretriciousness, from loss of honor, self-respect, and decency, and which is sought from strangers only.

3

We may conduct ourselves in a very creditable manner and really deserve wide approval, yet we must not expect that we shall be immune from censure. "Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow," says Shakespeare, "thou shalt not escape calumny." It is absolutely impossible to satisfy all people; he who tries to do so is prone to become a weakling and to be despised. And there is no one who has not enemies; again, there are always with us those mean people who, the prey of jealousy and bitterness, take joy in belittling us and our achievements, who are eager to cast reproach and ridicule, who search out our failures and lapses; indeed, they often go so far as to manufacture weaknesses when none they find. Sad to state, this tearing-down disposition is sometimes found among those who are considered intelligent, but we should be mindful that many know books but not themselves, that they have not as yet learned the cardinal principles of all true education, namely, the subjection of the baser instincts. We really can not afford to waste time and thought over the revilements of the envious, of our enemies. It may be wise to listen, however, for enemies are more frank than friends; we may, therefore,

if the criticisms seem to have grains of truth and to be worth attention, use them profitably, as suggestions for improvement.

He who has learned to forget the tribulations of the past, to reconcile himself to opposition, misrepresentation, and other hindrances to his smooth progress becomes a full and a happy man. Everyone makes errors, innocent and otherwise; for instance, it would require several large volumes just to mention the ridiculous mistakes made by famous literary persons; and there is in the life of everyone some act, some thought, which, if published, would cause grievous heartaches. And the farther we advance the more obstacles will be placed in our way, often by acquaintances; many people, it seems, wish success to those far off, not to those of whom they can say, "I knew him when . . . ." The path to fame is indeed enticing, but unless one has a stout heart one better not attempt it. As Lloyd George remarked, in responding to the statement that he had reached the mountain of fame and responsibility: "The higher up you climb the colder it becomes and the lonelier you find it. You are open to every storm and blast of wind. You are more exposed there to attacks of every kind." Indeed, history is painfully replete with illustrations of the lack of

appreciation accorded to great men in their own generation, though it is only just to say that there are numerous instances where honors were awarded prematurely and rashly. Christ was looked upon as so unimportant that Josephus, practically a contemporary, did not mention Him; there is in some editions of Josephus' *History* a small paragraph concerning Christ, but this is an interpolation. Plutarch excluded from his *Lives* men more illustrious than many of those he described. Shakespeare was hated and villified in his lifetime; so little was written about him while he lived that a satisfactory biography can not be compiled. Galvani was dubbed "the frogs' dancing master." Washington was calumniated fiercely; were one to affirm today what his enemies said about him he would be proved a liar and clapped into jail. The lives of Socrates, Dante, Harvey, Newton, Galileo, Pasteur, Fulton, Westinghouse, Semmelweiss, Grant, Bell—in short, of all men who tried to make the world better for their presence—tell the same story, namely, that criticism, ridicule, hindrance, even persecution are almost invariably tasted by those who would progress.

A certain amount of hostility and impediment must be expected; it is to be considered as natural. Should we be unable to meet it, we may

as well resign ourselves to obscurity and misery; if we desire to escape it entirely, we had better hie away to some secret cave, there to live as hermits; even then we would be criticised, though we might not know it. It is best, however, to go on, caring not greatly for either the world's praise or its jeers, determined to "stand the gaff" and to be undissuaded by it, and encouraged, if necessary, by the example of some worthy man whose road was none too easy but who surmounted his difficulties. Of all examples, we especially recommend Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln's life might justly be termed a series of failures and hardships; in fact, nature called "two strikes" on him at the start. Failing in business, he took it upon himself to pay the debts; he was fifteen years in doing so. His fiancée died. He went into the Black Hawk War a captain and came out a private. He failed in his effort to enter the legislature. He failed to obtain a position in the United States Land Office. He failed in his candidacy for the Senate and for Vice-President. When President, as if the gigantic national problems were not enough, he was villified, obstructed, ridiculed, misunderstood, unappreciated; it is not going too far to say that no one was more vehemently and falsely assailed than he. But he did not

give up or become embittered; he kept his faith in himself, in his God, in his principles, in his fellow men; he remained patient, tolerant, kindly, forgiving, uncomplaining; he preserved his optimism, his sense of humor. He is, indeed, a lesson for all of us.

4

Just as no two thumb prints are identical, so no two persons are exactly alike in the molecular arrangement of their brain cells. In other words, each of us is a new combination of traits, with characteristics and potentialities entirely distinct from all who have preceded us and all who will follow us. But, unfortunately, this birthright of individuality rarely makes a permanent appearance. Sometimes this is due to education and social pressure which would place us all in the same mold and keep us there; sometimes, to parents who fashion their children after So and So, or according to the vagaries of fancy, stamping out every spark of personality as it arises. Oftener, we ourselves are to blame; we are too lazy to search out and develop our particular talents, or we are too afraid that in being ourselves we shall incur displeasure. Consequently, very few of the world's billions of creatures are leaders, trail-blazers, creators of

thought; in fact, the vast majority are content to remain in the rut, and follow a new path only after it has been well-worn and proved absolutely safe by those intrepid enough to think for themselves, to explore, and to weather adversity.

It is, of course, well that social pressure be brought to bear upon us; there are many things, as morals, business ethics to which we should conform. It is wise, also, that we be given models, but we should be sure that they are good ones and that we emulate sterling qualities such as perseverance, integrity, courtesy, patience, rather than superficialities and idiosyncrasies. Yet if we are to be forever ruled by what has been the custom, slaves of the wishes and ideas of others, impersonators of somebody else, we may be sure that we shall never rise above mediocrity nor add an iota to the world's betterment. Still, most of us are so guided. Millions, for example, cling tenaciously to all that has been taught them by their preceptors in business, law, medicine, science in general; millions swallow without the slightest mastication everything said or written by "authorities"; millions, who might be successes in certain callings, sacrifice their happiness by not daring to engage in occupations for which they are fitted, fearful

of what people may say; millions hesitate to sponsor an idea of their own, or to champion a constructive idea of another's making; millions are nothing but apes, physically and mentally, of their fellows. Not only this, but these very same people, though they might follow the leader in the case of a new style of dress or coiffure, evolved probably by a cabaret dancer or the like, seem to hate all real progress, all developmental change, and belittle, laugh at, and impede him who would make worth-while additions to human knowledge and welfare.

To be ourselves, to go our own way rather than the way others would have us to go, to achieve, to merit fame, requires courage, confidence, determination. But it takes these things to do anything of real value. As someone has said, it took courage to eat an oyster for the first time; it takes courage for the young man to apply himself to his studies and his work, to conquer his passions, to overcome the sluggards who laugh at him, who tell him that he lives only once, that he is foolish to deny himself. And it takes discretion also. We must not, for instance, follow courses nor champion ideas which are plainly detrimental to the common good, which cause us to neglect our duties to family and friends, which are obvious devices for obtaining

notoriety, which are without logic or worth whatever; again, we must not be mandarins in forcing our views upon others, nor become angry if our theories are not immediately accepted and proof is requested. But most of all it requires work, and plenty of it. In only a few instances has anything of lasting importance been accomplished save after years of patient and hard study, yet most of us wish to become famous quickly; we have day-dreamed so much that we have turned our backbones into wishbones; our minds constantly display a "No Parking Here" sign to anything that necessitates real thinking. Work is the law, the earnest of what is desired; and if to it we bring ambition, perseverance, confidence; if we study and develop our possibilities; if we master weaknesses, especially love of ease and fear of "What will people say?" we are practically sure to advance, and thereby to gain praiseworthy notice. But if, in spite of all, we prefer a life of absolute conformity, of "safety first" at all costs, of being too proud to fight for principles and ideas, it is not too much to ask that we, at least, lend a helping hand to those who desire to work out their own destinies, who dare to forge ahead; that we keep an open mind, examine the new without bias, or premature acceptation or denunciation; in other words,

that we do a little thinking for ourselves. If we do this, our contribution to human progress and happiness will be by no means small.

5

Marcus Aurelius advises us to begin each day with the thought: "This day I shall meet with the busybody, the ungrateful, arrogant, deceitful, envious, unsocial. All these things happen to them by reason of their ignorance of what is good and evil."

It may be helpful to keep this observation in mind, but not uppermost, else we may become puffed by vanity and blind to personal shortcomings. It is far more desirable to believe that most of our associates are good fellows, fair and square, and will give us our deserts. If, therefore, we wish to win popularity, we must make ourselves worthy of it; and there is nothing, probably, which so adds to happiness, and which routs feelings of inefficiency and inferiority, as the manifestation of our fellows' good will. And the achievement of this is possible for all of us, especially if we analyze ourselves so as to learn our deficiencies and irritating features. Unfortunately, we are prone to note the mote in the eye of our neighbor but not the beam in our own; even though we are charitable enough to admit

a fault, we contend that we can not help it, that it is natural for us to be so when, in truth, the cause is laziness, an unwillingness to put forth the effort requisite for its correction.

As stated, we can, if we will, gain the good esteem of our fellows; and at the same time be true to our characters, our beliefs, our personalities. Most of us are of the common people whom, as Lincoln said, God loves so much; He made so many of them. Daring, the possibility of sacrifice of position, or of partisan newspaper broadsides will not, probably, disturb the even tenor of our lives; unlike some politicians, for example, we shall not be tempted to prostitute our convictions because of what this group or that may do to us. But even though our circle is small, we can not please all of the people some of the time, nor some of the people all the time. We shall have to disagree, to refuse, to reprimand, to do our own living and our own thinking. And we shall be misunderstood, perhaps disliked and criticised. Yet we can gain the good will of the majority, and of those who count. Not by affectation, pretense, publicity campaigns large or small. Nor need we achieve fame, write books, possess social or business prestige, or pulchritude. All we require is that we be worthy, that we practice the codes of conduct

which promote friendly feeling. For example, we need but be courteous to everyone, regardless of intellectual or pecuniary status; speak the best of all, and ill of none; be genuinely pleased, and show pleasure when our associates meet with good fortune; ungrudgingly acknowledge their merits to others; be interested in their successes and good qualities rather than in their frailties and failures; be a "booster" and an enthusiast, not a wrecker and a killjoy. In short, we need only apply the Golden Rule to daily life, practice the fast-decaying art of being gentlemen and gentlewomen.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FEAR OF RIDICULE

Timidity—Cause and Cure—Ways to Combat the Feeling of Inferiority—Use of Suggestion—Strengthening Will-power, Decision, Assertion—How to Overcome Repression, Anticipation and Retrospection, Solitude—A Philosophy of Life—Blushing

1

In this chapter—a continuation of the preceding—we intend to pay particular attention to a large group of persons known as the timid.

We all recognize the timid. They are, of course, the extremely shy, sensitive, self-conscious, bashful, reticent; those who are very awkward in appearance, speech, and gesture; who court solitude; who are racked by indecision; who blush for trivial reasons; who dread all responsibility.

Timidity is fear. In a few words, it is the fear of being ridiculed, because of mistakes, failure, physical imperfections, intellectual deficiencies, social handicaps, painful secrets of one kind

or another that one does not wish revealed. Each of us, doubtless, has felt it, but only its captives can appreciate it fully. Its pain is unrelenting. Being fear, it undermines physical and mental ability. It is a foe of success. True, the timid may make progress in literature, art, and the like, but rarely in the world of politics, business, sport. It is a barrier to the satisfaction of the love life, and thus adds more coals to the fire; comparatively few of the timid marry, and those who do are often out of harmony with their mates. It denies one the joys of companionship; the timid make themselves outcasts from social pleasures; and, unless they obtain release, they become more solitary, more wretched, and more enslaved as time goes on.

2

In most instances, the timid are made, not born. Very often the seeds are sown in childhood, by some one or more experiences, or ideas that have left a pronounced sense of inferiority or shame. Stated in another way, the instinct of self-abasement has become superior to the instinct of self-assertion, and dominates the personality. (The self-abasement instinct, briefly and broadly defined, prompts one to depreciate

oneself, to be submissive and retiring; the instinct of self-assertion does the opposite. Under normal conditions, each of these is about equally developed, and helps to balance the personality. When either is hypertrophied, character traits, pleasing or displeasing according to the amount of the hypertrophy, follow. Thus, one whose self-assertion is enlarged tends to be very proud, egotistic, brusque, bold.) We have considered in an earlier chapter some of the factors that may incite an inferiority feeling in early life. Often, however, timidity is generated in later years, especially at puberty and adolescence, and is fathered or perpetuated by faulty habits of thought.

Since timidity has many roots and branches, it is wise to have an understanding as to its probable origin in one's own case, especially if one has been a sufferer over many years. Frequently, one is dimly or not at all aware of the motivations of the timidity. It is rarely, if ever, harmful to know oneself; few of us really do, and it is best that someone better qualified than ourselves act as interpreter and guide. Analysis is not always required, and even when obtained it does not do away with the requirement that one help oneself. There is, unfortunately, no panacea to offer, especially a literary one,

but in many instances the timid will find a solution by resolutely embracing tactics similar to those outlined below.

3

It has been stated that the timid are timid because they feel, consciously or unconsciously, that they are inferior in some way to the majority of their fellows. Rarely are they abashed in the presence of those they deem their inferiors. Consequently, anything that will build a sense of equality, or which will increase one's self-regard, will check the timidity.

In accomplishing this there is nothing too insignificant for our attention. Even the wearing of a boutonnière daily has been known to elevate a man's spirits, and in other ways to react favorably upon his personality. Some have found confidence and security by practicing thrift. Money may not be everything, but it must be admitted that it does help to promote independence and self-reliance.

Regard for our personal appearance can not fail to buoy our faith in ourself. Thus, the correct posture elevates our organs, our feelings, and enables us to look the world in the face in more ways than one. Well-kept hair and finger nails, pressed trousers, shined shoes and shoes

kept in repair, a sponge bath and a change of outer clothing each evening all generate a sense of cleanliness, freshness, optimism, and self-respect. As to clothing, it is always a good investment to look our best. We need not be dandies, or spend more than we can afford. The important point is neatness.

Physical development is of great value. We should not—as so many of the timid do—be unduly solicitous of the body. Nor should we brood about the possibility of halitosis, "the medical name for bad breath," a subject so delicate, we are told, that no one will mention it, that it keeps us from having suitors, and does many other direful things. If we have any doubts, "ask Dad; he knows." Or we might ask a physician. The latter course is advisable; it will save many from needless anxiety, and will give others a much more rational plan than the indiscriminate use of mouth washes.

What is advised is a quiet observance of the simple rules of right living. Stress might be placed upon vigorous, daily exercise. This rouses the organs, whips up the circulation, routs out the depressing ideas that have held sway. With a strong body, we have a consciousness of adequacy, even though we are not a Samson or the possessor of muscles the size

of sugar bowls. Often we see things gloomily and discount ourselves because our liver is out of gear, or our bowels are sluggish; in such cases, exercise is the doctor.

Exercise under skilled direction and in company is more stimulating than that taken when alone. Therefore, a course in a gymnasium is advisable. So, also, exercise which has an element of contest. For example, boxing, hunting, tennis, horseback riding. Many men have come out of their shells of submission by becoming marksmen; others, by developing skill as anglers; others, by learning the art of self-defense. Of course, a man may not care to do any of these things, and he may have serious doubts as to their utility. But if he refuses to try, he can not know.

On the other hand, we may raise our standard of personal valuation by improving the mind. If we are cognizant of an impeding deficiency in a particular direction, as in speaking, grammar, selling power, the logical thing to do is to focus attention on that subject. Not a few have overcome timidity by resolutely seeking opportunities to make speeches, as at clubs, banquets, political gatherings; the fact that their first efforts were failures did not deter them from "carrying on." All of us, for that mat-

ter, might realize that there are numerous ways in which we can improve ourselves. We never know all there is to be known about anything, especially about our jobs. Not only does study improve us, but it also gives us an interest in life, keeps our thoughts from ourselves. He who has no absorbing interest looks in, not out; the ideas are circular; and if he becomes self-centered in consequence, it is not surprising.

4

Auto-suggestion is an effective weapon in increasing our feeling of equality with our fellows, and in generating belief in ourselves. Auto-suggestion has received much attention of late years, and in many instances has been carried to absurdity. It is nothing new; it has been known for ages. Its place in therapeusis is unquestioned.

The timid constantly ruminate on various painful ideas. They read something derogatory to themselves in practically all they see or hear. They remind themselves ceaselessly that they are inferior beings, that they are deficient in this or that, that their associates surpass them in numerous ways. Particularly, do they convince themselves that they will fail in whatever they attempt. It is only natural, therefore, that

these ideas control them; we are largely what we believe ourselves to be, and we accomplish, other things being equal, what we think we can accomplish.

The remedy for this state of affairs is contrary suggestion. If the suggestion is practiced often enough—say daily, firmly, and perseveringly—it will gradually displace the former suggestion and will control the beliefs and acts. Thus, instead of thinking that people are criticising us, or depreciating us, or what not, we should insist that such is not at all the case; we are not deceiving ourselves here, for the ideas formerly entertained anent these things are erroneous. Instead of believing that we are certain to fail, we should believe that we will succeed. Surely, we can only fail, whether the task be physical or mental, when we doubt or predict failure, for doubt acts as a brake to performance. If, for example, a baseball player were always to go to the bat telling himself that he would strike out, his batting average would be almost nil.

Confidence is the ally of success. The thought "I can" is always preferable to the thought "I can not"; the one stimulates; the other inhibits. And there is much that we can do. Each of us has powers of which we are not aware simply

because we do not call upon them. In fact, we use only about one-fourth of our physical and mental capabilities. Many men who are by no means our equals surpass us solely because they have and employ assurance; they are not afraid to try; doubt and defeat are not in their dictionaries. Not all of us can achieve really big things; we have limitations, of course, but we certainly can accomplish more than we do at present. And the first step in developing our possibilities is the casting out of needless and hindering doubt and fear, and the generation of faith in ourselves.

5

In combatting any fear, it is essential that the will be strengthened. Like a muscle, the will develops with exercise; without exercise, it becomes flabby. And just as it takes time to restore an atrophied muscle, so does it take time to build up a will that has grown weak through disuse. Habits of mind, especially long-standing habits, are not routed in a day, nor by wishing; but the fact to remember is that they are conquerable. A man can be the master of his thoughts if he desires to be, if he wills hard enough, and takes the initiative. A war, of any kind, is never won by purely defensive methods;

the offensive is necessary. No man can fashion a will for another; one must do that for oneself. But, to repeat, no matter how flaccid the will may be, it can be made stronger—by determination, by action, by perseverance.

There are many ways in which the timid might, and need to, strengthen their wills. One is by making decisions promptly, and carrying them out as quickly as possible. Most of the timid evade the making of decisions, of taking responsibilities of all kinds; or they procrastinate, fearful that they will be guilty of error or be criticised. Were the decisions called for of importance, the delay might be condoned, but usually they are concerned with trivial things. And, of course, the longer the delay the more difficult decision and action become. For example, a person wants to sell to a prospect, or to see about a position, or to obtain an interview; but countless imaginary rebuffs prompt him to walk around the block a few times, to think the matter over, to put it off until tomorrow; on the morrow he is even more undecided and has more fears than on the day before. The time to act in such a case is at once, with the determination to go through with the proposition whatever the result. A few exercises of the will in such directions are priceless; a few fail-

ures or rebuffs are infinitely preferable to hours of fears which sap one's physical strength and one's mental powers and peace. Therefore, make it a rule to decide and to act whenever the occasion arises. Even though you succeed in making a right decision only seventy times out of a hundred, you are doing very well.

Another quality that requires development is self-assertion. The timid hesitate to speak their thoughts, lest they cause offense. It is, of course, well to be a good listener, mindful, as Socrates points out, that nature gave us two eyes, two ears, and only one tongue. It is prudent, too, always to be tactful and courteous; but when you are expected to express an opinion, a request, or a command, you should be emphatic. You should say "No" when you wish to do so; you should disagree when you feel like disagreeing. Again, you should say "I" when you are giving your beliefs, not the weak "It is said," "So and So says," etc. Certainly, you can never get very far on the road to success and popularity by being afraid that you will be wrong, or offend, or be criticised. The man who is admired, who forges ahead, is not he who vacillates and is malleable, but he who is forceful, who has what we call a strong personality. And nothing creates force or belief

in yourself so much as saying just what you think, without hedging, or apologies, or citations of authorities for your every belief or point of view.

The timid tend to repress their feelings too much. Often they appear to be selfish, indifferent, unaffectionate, sometimes hiding their real selves behind a mask of coldness or brusqueness. Others never permit themselves to show pugnacity or anger; instead, they repress, and are petulant and nervous as a result. The remedy is to allow the emotions and sentiments, especially those that are pleasant, to have an outlet. If, for example, you desire to bestow a compliment, you should do so. If you are pleased, you should show pleasure. If you wish to demonstrate tender feeling toward your loved ones, then you should fulfill the wish. On the other hand, if on occasion you are justly indignant or angry, this should be made manifest. You need not fear that you will lose esteem thereby; in fact you are likely to win it, besides realizing that there are wonderful energies within you. Self-control is a good trait, but it can be carried too far. There is a righteous wrath. Anyone who carries self-control to an extreme is sure not to accomplish much, to be colorless, a human doormat, and to occupy a very low place

in his own estimation and in that of his fellows.

A favorite indoor sport of the timid is anticipation and retrospection. They do not plan without picturing hundreds of unhappy possibilities. They do nothing without conjuring countless lapses, slights, or what not, that have been patent only to themselves. This habit is both profitless and painful; it should be abandoned instanter. Instead of anticipating what may happen, you should give the thing contemplated no thought whatever, resolved to see it through come what may. When an event is passed, let it die without post-mortems. To resurrect it will only mean that you will bring to life numerous disagreeable ideas that are made out of a very vivid imagination, that have no actual existence; those that have some slight basis will be gigantic because one sees them as through a magnifying glass. An "I don't care," attitude might be adopted; there is not much danger that it will be carried to an extreme. If you think that people are continually subjecting you to criticism, you are very much mistaken. People have other things to do. True, they may glance at you, but they do so cursorily; you are soon forgotten. If a person who is not timid observes closely the people who glance at him while walking along the street, he will be surprised

at the number. He has not heeded before because the matter had not had much thought. It is because the timid are straining their attention in this and similar ways that they come to imagine that the eyes of the world are upon them, that they are the butt of every laugh.

As another means of building the will, one might cultivate social contacts rather than solitude. There are some people who really delight in solitude, and who are happier for it. The timid seek it only because they dread slights, or because they wish to escape notice. At heart they desire to be one of the crowd, and able to enjoy themselves. In such cases you must join the group, say at entertainments, socials, clubs, sporting events. When doing so, you should not be too anxious to make a favorable impression; and you should be yourself, not try to hide timidity by ceaseless chatter, false smiles, forced gayety. It may be of help to think that your friends understand and will make any allowances that may be necessary; that the strangers may never be seen again. Many military instructors teach the recruit to believe that the enemy soldiers are just as much afraid of him as he is of them; a similar line of reasoning might be employed toward the people you meet professionally or socially.

Particularly, should you not avoid the companionship of the opposite sex. The yearning for this companionship is natural; the excuses that many of the timid offer to it are artificial. Of course, you may act like a mute at first, but repetition will loosen the tongue and bring confidence and delight. Again, you are almost certain to find someone worthy of trust, to whom you can explain your difficulty, and obtain aid in overcoming it. Parenthetically, it might be stated that a tactful woman has been the means of metamorphosing many a timid man; the same might be said of tactful men toward timid women.

Each of the suggestions advised for strengthening the will requires effort, but if you really want to be the ruler of the kingdom of the mind, you must make the effort, determined to fight to a knockout, and betting heavily upon yourself. You must make a start; and there is no time like the present. You should remember, too, that you conquer most when you do the thing you dislike or fear to do; and that the longer you delay, the harder the task becomes.

6

To procure a full measure of peace, to drive through to accomplishment, to deal satisfactorily

with the petty annoyances of existence, you must have a philosophy of living to lean upon. You may find this in religion, in the writings of others, or in actual contact with the world of hard knocks. As to the latter, difficulties and tribulations are not without their virtues. They are the crucibles in which we are tested. Normally, they develop the character, stamina, fighting qualities, and reconcile us to existing things. The timid are crushed by them. Their trouble is that they have not been jolted hard enough; they have been so shielded from real adversity that the really minor wounds and pin-pricks of life pain them grievously.

In formulating a philosophy of life, it may be well to realize—the sooner the better—that the present world is the world in which we have to live; that life has its problems for all. The world can not be made over to suit us; we must accept it as it is. Everyone must taste failure, rebuffs, unpleasantness of one kind or another. All find the draughts bitter, but the successful and the happy do not become soured nor are they overcome by them. They may have a few sleepless nights, but they soon charge the trials to experience, to profit rather than to loss, and knowing that a good "forgettery" is a great aid to equanimity, they consign the memories to the limbo of things.

It may be well, too, to bear in mind that it takes all kinds of people to make a world. Most folks are with us, not against us; and if we get along well with the majority our game is good. Some we can not please; some do not like us; some "knock" us. The more inferior they are the more they depreciate others; the more their tendency toward evil, the more they suspect evil of others; and, like empty barrels, the hollower they are the louder they sound. We should "carry on," regardless. As Bacon says, the best sign that one is a nobody is the absence of criticism. And as Florence Nightingale tells us, the opinions of others concerning us depend little, or not at all, upon what *we* are but upon what *they* are. If our outstanding athletes permitted themselves to be intimidated by the boos of the "fans," they would write their obituary notices in the world of sport. If our statesmen, authors, actors, prominent people in other walks of life were to be bowed down by the gossip, usually false, that is being constantly circulated about them, to use a "bull," there wouldn't be any.

Again, in our social, business, and other dealnigs, let us remember that men are but men, not gods or superior beings. They are flesh and blood like ourselves; they have nursed the same

desires; they have been pained by the same vexations of body, mind, and spirit. We may not read this in their exteriors, but if we had their utmost confidence, we should find it true. And, after all, there are few great people; fewer geniuses. Such as are considered great are, in general, the easiest to deal with, the most modest, the most considerate of the feelings of others. It is only the mediocre and the unimportant who inflate themselves with self-praise; who are snobbish, affectatious, domineering, rude; who judge one's worth by one's occupation, or one's standing in Bradstreet or the Social Register; a rush of brains to the head will never trouble them. One should be patient with them, bear them no malice, but since they are small fry, in especial need of books on etiquette, one should not be fooled nor wounded by them.

Knowledge and accomplishment deserve respect. But they do not command awe, fear's younger sister. The "big" people are our friends, potentially if not actually. They feel that in spite of what the world may say, they know comparatively little and have accomplished less. They know that all work is noble; that every person who does his job well is doing something worth while, no matter how ordinary that job may appear to be. They realize, too,

that every man is their superior in some way, and that they can learn from him. This is worth bearing in mind—namely, that however humble we are there are some things in which we surpass; we have experiences and possessions that others would envy; we have observations that a philosopher or psychologist would like to discuss with us; we have ideas that are potentially great. Conscious of this superiority, let us go on, without vanity, or envy, or derogation, yet with confidence and self-reliance.

7

A few words, in closing, as to blushing:

Blushing is a physiological response to the feeling of shame. When it occurs for slight reasons it is abnormal. Such blushing often has its basis in some special incident, now buried in the mind, which has conditioned—or habituated—the nervous system to react in this particular manner to anything that has the least association with the original cause. Frequently, it is but part of timidity in general. Frequently, too, it is brought about and perpetuated by suggestion.

Much might be written about blushing and its correction. We shall content ourselves with a

few remedies which, in many instances, are successful.

As stated, blushing is often due to suggestion. By frequent repetition the mere thought of a blush is sufficient to produce it. The idea may come from without or from within, usually the latter. For example, one becomes embarrased for some reason. The emotion dilates the blood vessels of the face, causing a sense of warmth. One thinks of blushing, fears it, says mentally, "I am going to blush," and does blush. The antidote is to keep the thought of blushing out of mind—as by directing the attention to a near-by object or to some feature of the person to whom one is talking or listening—the moment the possibility of blushing enters one's mind. By training this can be effected, and in time the idea of blushing will lose its potency. If you have any difficulty in focusing the thoughts in the manner advised, it is better to think "I will not blush," rather than "I am going to blush." A few failures should not deter you from continuing the plan; with perseverance success is certain.

You may blush when alone. It may not be wise to recall unpleasant ideas, but it is often helpful in overcoming blushing. You might, then, recall ideas known to excite blushing, con-

vincing yourself when you do so that the ideas are powerless. The practice will lessen the force of the ideas and the confidence generated will counteract their effect. It might be mentioned that if you can employ the services of an understanding friend who repeats the ideas to you, or who tries to make you blush, it will expedite the cure.

A very good method is the courting of situations, persons, and places that tend to instigate blushing. The contact dulls the stimuli and repetition causes the ideas to grow cold. Should you blush, it is best to treat it jocosely; do not deny it, but affirm it pleasantly. People do not think less of you for blushing; they rather like you for it, and their jollity should be taken as well-meant.

CHAPTER IX

THE FEAR OF OLD AGE

The Span of Life—Deferents of Age—Fear of Loss of Position and Poverty—How to Be Happy and Useful When Old—Signs of Old Age

1

If those of us who are in the prime of life ever meditate upon our old age, doubtless we do so with disquiet, for to the majority old age signifies nearness to death, physical and mental incapacity, waning ambition, loss of love and other interests; it may mean, also, gray hairs, wrinkles, friendlessness, a journey over the hills to the poorhouse. And so many books and articles have been, and are still being, written which extol old age and which deny that it is an inclement season, that we have reason to be suspicious; no such energy is expended nor necessary to convince us of the pleasurableness of youth. All things considered, it is probably true that the common prejudice against, and the dread

of, old age are unwarranted. At any rate, an inquiry made among a representative number of the aged would show that not only do the old find the winter of life agreeable, but, also, that they have no desire to live their lives over again.

If we are to judge by the past, nothing said in favor of age will dissuade men from seeking to escape it. But logic alone should tell us that it is extremely doubtful that a preventive will be discovered, especially a more or less magic one. Like death, old age is natural, and will ever be unavoidable; every living thing in nature dies, every living thing grows old. It is possible though to lengthen the number of years allotted to us. At present, the average span of life is about fifty; and less than half of these years is accompanied by perfect health and efficiency. There is really no valid reason why the majority of us should not live to be ninety at least, and this is a conservative figure. But to live merely is of no advantage, nor desirable. No one cares to be a model for another description of old age such as is given in Ecclesiastes; in this event, like the mythical person who requested the gods for the privilege of living forever, but who forgot to ask that he remain young also, one would be glad to have a period put to one's existence. Besides added years one must

have health, happiness, productive power. All of these are possible, not by means of buttermilk, monkey or "love" glands, fountains of youth, and similar alleged panaceas, but by common-sense measures only.

In many places in this book we have asserted that prevention is better than cure. We might do so again—not, as stated, that old age can be side-stepped, but that its supposed vicissitudes can be avoided. The realization of this requires foresight, especially in youth and middle life. As Cardinal de Salis wrote at the age of one hundred and ten: "By being old when I was young, I find myself very young when I am old."

2

A physician is inclined to emphasize the value of personal hygiene on the slightest provocation. But even so, it must be granted that the rules of right living are important where the deferring of old age is concerned. It is axiomatic that the best-used machines last the longest. And if any machine is to give good and lasting service, it must be carefully looked after. So with our bodies. We must, if we wish them to age slowly and to maintain their efficiency, supply them with proper fuel, remove wastes often

enough, exercise them, avoid excess of all kinds, be moderate in all things, and make these practices matters of lifelong habit.

As important as physical hygiene is mental hygiene. The kindly, pleasant old person whom all of us are glad to meet, and the crabbed, fretful one whom we all try to avoid, are not anomalies of age nor incomprehensible. The characteristics displayed are only reflections of mental traits which have guided the persons throughout their lives. Which type of old person you are to be can be determined by yourself, but only so in early years, since dispositions become tenacious, and with age more or less unalterable. You who prefer the pleasant type must, therefore, avoid chronic irritability, impatience, worry, fret, excessive ambitions, and must practice courtesy, serenity, poise, and other balancing attributes. The prescription is especially applicable to the fair sex, whose desire for youthfulness of face and figure, as well as for attractiveness, never fully dies. If you see fit to neglect the admonition, you can expect only to grow more crabbed, unlikable, and unhappy with the years, and to have for company plenty of wrinkles and "crow's feet." Let no one blame old age for a sour personality; old age is naturally happy, charitable, forgiving, broad-

minded, likable; if it seems to be the opposite the fault is in the individuals.

There are several hygienic points which it may be well to notice before passing on.

One of these is the advisability of submitting yourself to periodic health examinations, say yearly, by physician and dentist. It would be valuable to heed the suggestion at all ages, but it is particularly pertinent when you near the age of forty. At this time there tend to be physical defects present, which, if attended to at once, may be eradicable; indeed, most of the ills we suffer are avoidable, the only valid excuses for sickness being accident and infection. Again, from forty on, expert advice is generally necessary as to changes in living habits. It is not reasonable to expect that our bodies will be uniformly sound, that they will wear evenly, that they will remain in good repair, that their requirements will always be the same; but though we study and make allowances for our automobiles, and subject them to expert overhaulings frequently, we are very neglectful of the human mechanism; and consequently, minor disorders grow serious, we rust out or pass out like a blow-out, rather than wear out. If periodic examinations have not been part of one's program, it is wise to institute them at once.

There are any number of elderly persons whose maladies and whose peevish dispositions are correctable, and wrongly charged to old age itself.

Our second suggestion concerns diet, the importance of which has been stressed by all thoughtful writers on longevity.

As one grows old—and, from a safety standpoint, the age of forty is not a bad time to look upon oneself as aging—there is a physiological alteration in the dietetic requirements. There is less need of food in general, and less need of proteins in particular, especially of meat. Meat has, it is true, been blamed for a large number of ills, often questionably; for instance, studies of Egyptian mummies reveal that arteriosclerosis, which today is charged to meat eating, among other things, was common among them, yet the Egyptians were not partial to this foodstuff. But it is true, nevertheless, that most of us, and those in middle life especially, eat more meat than is required, and more than our bodies can take care of properly.

To satisfy these physiological conditions, there should be a reduction in the amount of food eaten. If a person can restrain his appetite without great discomfort, he may find it a safe rule to eat such foods as he desires but not as much as he desires; probably four small meals

a day, rather than three large ones, may help to appease hunger and prevent over-eating. It is more satisfactory to the majority to satisfy the desire for food; therefore, one might cut down on proteins and supply bulk by means of foods of comparatively low fuel value, as fresh vegetables, fruits, graham and bran breads, cereals; these foods also favor intestinal elimination, and the latter deserves attention, both because constipation promotes discomfort, and because if marked arterial disorders are present undue straining at stool may be too much for the blood vessels to withstand. Highly seasoned foods, rich foods, as liver, sweetbreads, and the like are particularly objectionable; the more simple the diet the better.

3

Foresight is also requisite as to occupation and to thrift.

It is a bromide that there is no sympathy in business, and that business has no respect for gray hairs. And there is probably nothing more pathetic than the old man who lives in constant dread of the loss of his position and all that this may entail, in the way of poverty. But if we investigate we shall learn that, as in the case of business depression generally, and of the inmates

of poorhouses, the old men out of jobs or who fear for their situations are unskilled workers, or have followed too long occupations which pay poorly and which offer few opportunities for advancement. We shall find, too, that they have been content to drift with the tide, unwilling to row upstream, to taste denial, averse to studying themselves and their work. There are many striking exceptions to this, but the exceptions are best considered as proving the rule.

Unfortunately, not much practical encouragement can be given to the aged person who has business worries. Consequently, youth should consider the matter well. There is in most positions room for advancement, and always room for improvement; and he who looks ahead, endeavors to make himself so useful that his services can not be easily dispensed with, is almost certain to be secure from occupational anxiety when gray hairs steal upon him. Should one feel, after a careful study of the question, that one's present employment offers no future, it is best to change as soon as is possible and wise. Procrastination is not only the thief of time, but of good intentions also.

We might urge here the value of skilled occupations for women; in fact, it is recommended that all young women be trained in, and engage

in, some useful business or professional career. This makes them better wives and mothers, independent in case they do not marry, and self-supporting should the necessity arise after marriage. A large number of women realize these things, and have acted upon them; many more might heed their good example.

As to thrift: It would be only reasonable to expect that business progress would free one from financial difficulties in old age. But the opposite is often true. With many persons, better paying positions are synonymous with increased expenditures; the majority of workers probably live up to their incomes. If attention is given to the proverbial rainy day, it is but fleeting; earning capacity, they believe, will be good for a long time, they will turn over a new leaf next year, and so on.

The only remedy for lack of money is money. And the only practical way to obtain money, at least for the majority of us, is by work. The best way to save a part of what we earn is by the practice of thrift. But thrift should not make one ambitious for jobs which pay well, but which have no future prospects. Nor should it lead one to be parsimonious, skimping the necessities of life and all of life's pleasures, in dread of poverty's halls; as a rule, those who save in this way,

while they may accumulate wealth, rarely get much out of it, their miserly habits remaining with them to the end of their lives. True thrift means the conduction of one's spending on a business basis, the avoidance of extravagance, of foolish efforts to show off, or to compete with persons whose financial standing is more solid than one's own. It requires little if any real denial, no sacrifice of happiness. And it is not all saving—that is, depositing money in the bank. It opposes the skimping of such things and such outlays as tend to advance one personally and in business; it discourages, also, refusals to invest in a home of one's own, in worthy bonds and similar sound investments. Considering the amount of fraudulent "investment opportunities" offered to the public, and the millions of dollars mulcted from the unwary (about $500,000,000 annually, it is estimated), we may be forgiven for stating that no investment in stocks, bonds, oil wells, etc., should be made without the advice of a thoroughly reliable broker or banker.

There are few people who, if they tried, and especially if husband and wife came to an early understanding in the matter, could not spend a little less than the earnings. But however meager the income, and however large the out-

lays, one can at least save enough, say with the aid of endowment policies, to guard against becoming a ward of the State in declining years; incidentally, it might be mentioned that a surprising large number of men and women entertain this special fear. For a comparatively small sum one can find lodgement in a respectable home for the aged, which homes are far from being as forbidding as many of us imagine. They are, at any rate, preferable to dependency upon sons, daughters, or other relatives. By this time everyone should know that great confidence is not to be placed in what children will do for their parents; the children may mean well, but they often have cares of their own; again, they have their own lives to live. It is only exceptionally that dependent relatives are happy; as a rule, they endure many hardships, and the close of life comes none too speedily for them.

4

Coming to old age itself, if there is anything, above all, which promotes peace and satisfaction, at any time of life, if there is any secret of youth, it is productive and interesting work. Formerly, we considered it unseemly for the aged to be engaged in business; we contended that our elderly relatives needed a rest from

their labors, though the motive behind this was pride, a fear that our old might be judged failures. But we have changed our point of view. We know today that the man who retires from his work, who gives himself up to idleness and the pursuit of pleasure, finds only misery, and speeds to his death.

As a rule, when a man rounds the half-century mark, he is either financially independent or not. If independent, it does not matter very much to him whether he retires; if dependent upon what he earns, he must, of course, plod on whether he wills or no. In any case, youthful ambition and enthusiasm have cooled considerably; the spirit of rivalry, of struggle, the quest of power and possession, are less in the foreground. Yet one can not afford to become inactive, to lose initiative, or interest in one's labors; the person who permits these to die, will soon die himself. He is not urged to work with the same vigor, though many old men are able to, and, for the sake of their mental well-being apparently must, do so. In general, he should, with the advancing years, learn to work more easily, with less hurry and fret; he should intrust the details to others, and disport more. A good formula is half the hours to work, the remainder to play, including one's hobbies.

The nature of the work pursued is an individual matter. Other things being equal, there is no good reason why the elderly should not follow their usual occupations. If a man has a financial interest, or is powerful, in his business, he may be able to do this; but if not, it is probable that he will be pensioned off, even though it has been amply demonstrated that old age is not necessarily inefficient; indeed, it is often more efficient than the young blood which every business feels must be transfused from time to time. At any rate, should the usual work be contraindicated for any reason, or should he be retired against his will, then let him find agreeable work of another kind, even though the occupation is more profitable to his knowledge and his peace of mind than to his purse.

Work for the aged is so necessary in lengthening their days and in maintaining their usefulness and happiness that it can not be emphasized too much. It has been claimed that the most productive years are between thirty and forty, but investigation reveals that most of the world's leaders, in all walks of life, in the past and in the present, did not begin to show their best abilities until they were fifty or more. We might give examples in abundance. For in-

stance, Cato, Sophocles, Goethe, Cromwell, Haydn, Robert Browning, Victor Hugo, Herbert Spencer, Benjamin Franklin, Michael Angelo, Gladstone, Voltaire, Sir Stephen Smith, Pasteur, and many others were active and very efficient at an age which most of us would consider incompatible with achievement. If we look about us we shall discover that the men entrusted with the destinies of nations, who lead religious bodies, who are prominent in industry and science are not by any means those in middle life exclusively. All old men are not equally sapient, nor equal mentally and physically; but neither are all young men. And while the examples generally offered in proof of the worth of age may be exceptional, yet they go to show that a man's abilities and value cannot be measured by his years alone. One is never too old to learn, nor to accomplish; would that men of every age profited by the fact.

Next to work as a secret of youth and cheerfulness we place association with youth. It is said, and is true, that crabbed age and youth can not live together, but the adjective should be noted well. No one relishes dictatorialness, garrulity, carping criticism, whatever the age, yet these many of the old dole out to youth.

Were such faults absent, were the old to make allowances for youth's ways, and were they not to expect youth to possess the wisdom which is acquired only after years of experience, there is no good reason why old age should be friendless. The advantages of cultivating youths' companionship are many; one is kept abreast of the thoughts of the day, infected by youths' fire and enthusiasm; one's milk of human kindness is not permitted to curdle. Obviously, there is nothing to be gained by merely striving to be youthful in appearance and act, by attempting to outflap the flapper; it is more important and more becoming to be optimistic, active, young in thought, with due regard for the proprieties and expectations of years of discretion.

Attention is directed to the need of a more close association between father and son. In many families father and son are veritable strangers, at constant loggerheads with one another. There is often a psychological basis for this, for in his early years the boy is inclined to be jealous of the father's strength and power, and of the hold which the father has upon the mother's affections. Again, the mother, especially if the home life is none too happy, tends to hold the father up as a tyrant, to depreciate him in subtle

ways, if unconsciously, the object being the desire to be first in the boy's regard. Be these matters weighty or not, the attitude of hostility and lack of confidence are not to be encouraged. By it the boy loses much that is helpful to him in an educational way, and there are many times in a boy's life when he requires and desires a counselor and guide. The father is denied a companion, and in many ways suffers because his paternal instinct fails to find full expression.

5

Old age is not easy to define. It can not be gauged by the number of one's years; some persons are old chronologically but young in spirit and body; others are young in years but old in heart, or body, or both. Popularly, there are many criteria by which it is determined. We are told, for instance, that a man is as old as his arteries; a woman is as old as she looks, a man as old as he feels. Again, undue solicitude about health matters, diet especially, great interest in religion, the repetition of old jokes, the dwelling upon one's past accomplishments are considered sure signs that age has got the best of one.

Probably, the most infallible indication in lay opinion is a waning of sexual power and desire;

and as if fearful that these might depart countless persons are constantly seeking to fan them into flame. But here judiciousness is especially necessary. A subsidence of sexual ability and desire is physiological; the exact time for this is variable, in women probably about the age of forty-five, in men a little later. And as the sex passions are about to sing their swan songs they often make one supreme effort to have a final fling, manifested by orgasms, sexual cravings and ideas. This should not lead one astray; it is to be taken calmly, as something which will pass away. Love is life, however, and one's creative instinct never fully perishes. But crass and sensual love should be sublimated, replaced by a love which is less selfish, less primitive, more altruistic, and more general. For example, by a love of the beautiful in nature, by interest in children, by philanthropy, by aid to needy youths ambitious for an education, even by the cultivation of a garden, by sculpture, creative work of other kinds.

A better all-round sign of old age is found in the direction of one's thoughts.

Once a man begins to live in the past he is surely old. To keep in mind the "good old days"; to point out repeatedly how people lived and did things when one was young; to be in-

tolerant of alterations in business methods, manners, dress; to believe that the world and all in it are going to the dogs; that old ways are best and that nothing new is worth attention are sure toboggans to mental marasmus and misery. Nothing is so eternal as change, as someone said long ago; and if one really wishes content, if one desires to live and to progress, one must change also. One must look forward, not backward; out, not in. One must preserve one's optimism, sense of humor, belief in the goodness of men and of things. One must maintain interest in the world's work, still find joy in life's pleasures, try out the new, and, as far as is prudent, consign the ways and the achievements of the past to the historian.

CHAPTER X

THE FEAR OF DEATH

Why We Fear Death—Physical Pain at Death—Pain in Suicide—Mental Pain—Fear of Premature Burial—Fear of Punishment for Sin

1

DEATH comes to all men soon or late, but, if we are to believe Bacon, men fear it as children fear to go into the dark. The truth is, that it is less feared than is commonly supposed, and that it is the thought of death which is fearful and not death itself.

Should the thought of death give rise to anxiety, it is understandable. Strong within us is the instinct of self-preservation, and death suggests personal annihilation, an idea so repugnant that practically the only effective placebo for it is the belief in immortality. Again, death has, from our earliest years, formed unpleasant associations in our minds. Our preceptors have taught us that death and its "pains" are the wages of sin, and have drawn unhappy pictures

of what we may expect after it; we have sad memories of the last hours of dying relatives or friends, of the lamentations at their demise, of the physical alterations which death brings about, of the solemnity of the interment. Further, as if to soften it, we are wont to speak of death symbolically rather than frankly. We see this illustrated in the common expressions "passed away," "breathed his last," "gone West," "departed this life."

While many other facts like the above might be mentioned, we shall consider here only three of the chief causes of the fear of death. These are: (1) The fear of pain, physical or mental; (2) The fear of premature burial; (3) The fear of future punishment.

2

It is very generally believed that death is accompanied by physical pain, severe in degree. We read of death agonies, and hear of people who "died without a struggle," who "died quietly," which would lead us to infer that some form of physical violence is to be expected of death. As a matter of fact, there is no agony associated with death, no struggle, no peculiar pain or anguish of any kind. The majority of the dying die tranquilly, and while unconscious;

and the period of unconsciousness may last minutes, hours, or days. While one is unconscious, pain, physical and mental, is absent. Therefore, the majority of the dying are absolutely devoid of distress.

Even though the faculties remain clear to the very last, pain is not a marked feature. Should pain be present it is, as a rule, slight, is not unbearable, is not complained about, and its like has been borne before, many times, without murmur; again, it is the pain of the disease, not the pain of death—which, to repeat, has no special pain, nor does it differ materially from the pain experienced by those who undergo the same illness but who recover. These statements hold good whatever the age and whatever the malady. The old, probably, are more immune from possible pain than are others, for with the years their pain sense becomes more dull. To many mothers the last hours of dying infants seem to be characterized by great suffering, but it is probably true that sorrow and love cause an exaggeration of actual conditions. This point is better appreciated if we consider that in the presence of death, whoever the dying person may be, one is always moved with pity; even the hated enemy is treated with kindness. As Bacon says: "It is as natural to die as to be born, and to the

little infant perhaps the one is as painful as the other."

Of what disease one will die it is not often possible to predict, even though one has an apparently fatal malady; sometimes an intercurrent disease proves more serious, and it is not rare for those who seem beyond all hope to recover. However, among the common causes of death are heart disease, tuberculosis, pneumonia, kidney disease, diarrheal conditions, cancer.

Were we to study closely the last hours of persons dying of any of these maladies, we should find added proof that physical pain is not prominent at death. When death is due to heart disease, for instance, practically the only inconvenience, if any, is a slight difficulty in breathing; the fact that a vital organ is involved is not important, for vital organs are not the most painful. Most of those who die of heart disease lapse into unconsciousness before the end; and most of them die in their beds. Comparatively few who have heart trouble die suddenly, in spite of certain proprietary medicine advertisements to the contrary; indeed, medical authorities are often inclined to regard reports of sudden deaths from heart disease as confessions of ignorance as to the real causes of the deaths. Consumptives are known for their optimism, and

most of them are hopeful and happy throughout their illness. Pneumonia is rarely associated with pain when it lasts more than a few days; it takes the aged away so painlessly and so gently that it has been called the friend of the aged. Prior to death from kidney disease there is usually coma, so that no distress is felt. Fatal diarrheal states, whether primary or secondary to some other disease, are in most cases characterized by apathy and indifference. Surprising as it may seem, many persons die of cancer without experiencing any noteworthy pain, even when the internal organs are affected. But should one's own case be an exception to the rule, one may rest assured that the pain can be controlled; and that no physician would permit needless suffering to go unrequited, for unlike in the past we no longer believe that God wills that we suffer and that anodynes are opposed to His will.

In connection with this statement, let us digress long enough to deny that it is the custom of hospitals and of physicians to make use of powerful drugs, or of the so-called black bottle, so as to expedite death and to get the incurable out of the way. The idea that there is such a practice is prevalent, even among people who are intelligent in other respects. Where this wild fancy originated, it is impossible to deter-

mine accurately. Probably, the fact that certain patients died shortly after taking medicine may have led some fearful souls to form rash conclusions; the thought that death might have occurred even were no medicine given was not considered. Again, death subsequent to a hypodermic injection may have played some part, since most people think that morphine is about the only drug administered by injection. There are, however, any number of drugs which can be, and which often are, given hypodermically. Rarely is an agent such as morphine used when a patient is sinking; in most instances a stimulant is employed.

3

It may be asked if suicides experience much physical pain. The answer depends upon many factors, such as the mentality, the agent used, etc. It is estimated that about fifty per cent. of all suicides are insane, the most common type of suicidal insanity being the manic-depressive. It is probably true that the majority of insane suicides feel very little, if any, pain. Their minds are so occupied by a fixed idea, that of self-destruction, as to dull the sense of pain. A somewhat similar blocking of the pain sense by a fixed idea occurs in those who are killed or in-

jured in the heat of the battle, in the performance of heroic deeds, and the like. It explains the joy manifested by many religious persons undergoing martyrdom.

Many mentally normal persons commit suicide in moments of depression, anger, rebellion, disappointment, revengefulness. In these cases pain is often marked, and death takes place after days or weeks of suffering, and contrary to the wishes of the individuals who have a return of the desire to live. In addition to other reasons, this is because the sense of pain is not obtunded, or because a speedily fatal part is not involved, or because a slowly acting or corrosive poison is taken. The newspapers sometimes feature prominent suicides who are alleged to die gradually and painlessly; one should be sceptical of these, for the truth often lies in the opposite direction.

Attention is called to the fact that there are approximately twenty thousand suicides in the United States each year, about a thousand of them children. For obvious reasons, this is deplorable. Were the advocated preventives more strictly enforced, the number might be materially reduced. Since insanity plays a prominent part, it is imperative that the insane be detected in time and given prompt and proper

treatment; it is a wise precaution to see that every person who attempts suicide, or who threatens it, receives a mental examination. Apart from this, much can be done by strengthening the will-power, fortitude, and self-control of children, by impressing them with the duty they owe to themselves, their families, and the nation, in preserving life. Religion has always been a firm barrier against self-destruction; its worth cannot be overstressed. When school examinations are on, many children do away with themselves, fearful that they will be punished should they fail; overpressure at school is to be avoided therefore. Fire-arms and poisons left carelessly about the house, and lax laws as to the sale of such, enable many to carry out their transient suicidal impulses; they encourage homicide also. The daily press unwittingly suggests suicide to the weak-willed and the emotionally unstable; it would be helpful were the newspapers not to mention suicide at all, or at least were they to avoid naming the methods used by suicides.

Most of us, probably, look upon the suicide as a brave person, and thus we unconsciously condone and encourage him. We can not, of course, understand the mental anguish which may have prompted some suicidal acts, though

in a great many instances the motives are very trivial. At any rate, the suicide does not deserve to be classified as courageous. As Napoleon says: "What claim can that man have to courage who trembles at the frowns of fortune? True heroism consists in being superior to the ills of life in whatever shape they may challenge him to combat."

4

All of us understand the meaning of mental pain; it refers, of course, to fear, sorrow, regret, despair.

As with physical pain, careful study will show that mental pain is not frequent at death. When we possess health the wish to live and to enjoy life is strong, but when we are ailing life loses much of its enticement. This is due, at times, to removal from the interests of the outside world; at other times, to the melancholy produced by the disease process. Those of us who have undergone a siege of illness, as influenza, may be able to appreciate the "don't care" feeling which illness often brings about.

There are many conditions which modify the mental state of the dying. The age, for instance. The old are particularly stoical, indifferent. Through the years nature has been preparing

them, changing their viewpoints; and as if mindful of Lucretius' admonition, namely, that those who have feasted at the banquet of life should be content, as satisfied guests, to take their departure, they are perfectly acquiescent. The middle-aged are sometimes unwilling, often because of some duty undone, some work uncompleted. Frequently, their regret is for the dependent ones they are to leave behind; this fact should urge us to provide for our dependents while earning power is at its best. The young tend to be rebellious, resentful, but in general show little or no true fear, and resign themselves to the inevitable. They feel that there is much for them yet to see, to do, to enjoy, and that they are being dealt with unfairly. But should anyone, young or old, wish a respite from death, it is not derogatory; Christ Himself asked the same.

The religious convictions play parts. The man who dies conscious of having lived a just life, with the memory of kindnesses shown to his fellows, convinced of immortality and reward, naturally tends to have the so-called happy death. We must not infer that the unbeliever and the sinner invariably die in fear and trembling, with a swiftly moving panorama of their misdeeds prominent before their minds',

eye; most men, whatever their religious ideas, face death according to their temperaments, not according to their pasts. The true unbeliever does not lack courage, nor is he singled out for special suffering. The doubtful, and those whose anti-religious theories are insecure, as if grasping at a straw, usually solve their conflicts and find comfort by accepting the religion which they formerly ignored.

The place of death also influences the mental state. When death occurs at home, the dying person is often distressed by the weeping of relatives, the sight of the loved ones, the many suggestions that death is imminent. In hospitals and institutions these conditions are, as a rule, absent; and while deaths therein may be lonely, judged by the usual standards, they are peaceful at least.

Those who are condemned to death by civil or military courts exhibit little fear; there are exceptions of course. In these cases death wears a different countenance than it does in illness, for the condemned are generally in the prime of life and possess good health. Usually, the anguish of those whose lives are in jeopardy is confined to the period before their fate is decided and before sentence is passed; after sentence their sleep becomes peaceful, and they submit

quietly to the inescapable, solaced by religion or by a philosophy of their own or of others' making. Did space permit, we might mention any number of instances of criminals, traitors, spies, and the like, who went to their deaths without complaint, often with a smile or a witticism.

When, say by reason of accident, death strikes out of a clear sky, it does not usually produce fear, though it often does cause wonder, speculation, and surprise. Many scientific analyses have been made in proof of this. In general literature one sometimes finds mention of it. Thus, R. L. Stevenson says in one of his letters: "I had a very violent and dangerous hemorrhage last Spring. I am almost glad to have seen death so close with all my wits about me and not in the customary lassitude and disenchantment of disease. Even thus clearly beheld I find him not so terrible as we suppose." E. F. Benson relates that when engulfed in a crevasse, and apparently doomed, he had no fear, but wondered what arrangements would be made about his pupils, his house, the funeral.

Death is, then, in the vast majority of cases practically devoid of physical and mental pain. This is a conclusion supported by a careful, personal observation of several hundred deaths;

and it is a conclusion which will be vouched for by all those who have had sufficient experience, physicians for example. For corroboration, we might refer the reader to Sir William Osler's *Science and Immortality*. Dr. Osler tells us that man generally dies as he has lived, practically uninfluenced by the thought of future life, wondering, but uncertain, usually unconscious and unconcerned. Of five hundred whose deaths were studied closely, the great majority gave no indication of mental or physical unrest. Ninety suffered bodily pain or distress of one sort or another, eleven showed mental apprehension; two, terror; one, spiritual exaltation; one, bitter remorse. We might emphasize the fact that the number who experienced physical pain was small, but eighteen per cent. Moreover, the pain was the pain of the illness, not the pain of death, and, if deemed necessary, could have been controlled.

Unfortunately, few of us can verify the facts, at least practically; as a rule, we see but one or two deaths in a lifetime, and owing to our emotional state at the time, our preformed opinions, and our inexperience with the natural phenomena of death, we tend to draw faulty inferences from them. If, however, we wish to investigate the subject, we might do so by means

of literature, though here a judicious selection must be made. The death scenes of fiction writers are often purely imaginative, or are based on a narrow experience, or are written for effect. Religious writers also exaggerate the facts at times, innocently it may be.

Were we to commend any authors in particular, we might refer the reader to Cicero, Seneca, Socrates, Sir Francis Bacon, Florence Nightingale, among others. As might be expected, in the plays of Shakespeare, which mention about ninety deaths, the descriptions are, with a few exceptions, quite accurate; this is particularly true of the deaths from natural causes, such as disease and old age. Poetical writings, though largely fanciful, have been useful to many in dissipating the fear of death. For example, Tennyson's "In Memoriam," and "Crossing the Bar"; Bryant's "Thanatopsis"; Longfellow's "Resignation"; Gray's "Elegy"; Stevenson's "Requiem."

Biography is, probably, the best of all in this respect. It is true that biographers tend to hide their heroes' or heroines' weaknesses, yet they are, in general, reliable. And though resort to biography will reveal some instances where death was feared, as in the cases of De Maupaussant, Bunyan, Johnson, Tolstoy, we shall dis-

cover also that the great majority feared it little or none when in health, and that they found its approach most gentle. And we might remember that death has no favorites; "as the one dieth, so dieth the other." In this at least all men are equal.

5

The thought that we may be falsely pronounced dead and interred while living has, probably, come to all of us, but we generally dismiss it as unworthy of concern. Among nervous persons, the idea often gains a firm foothold, and gives rise to great torment. The fear is frequently caused or intensified by weird tales of alleged premature burials, in which the supposed agonies of the entombed are horribly pictured. Sometimes the fear is merely a form of, or part of, the fear of closed places; in these cases it is best removed by a medical psychologist. Occasionally, it has its starting point in so-called nocturnal paralysis. The latter is a disorder of sleep in which the waking process is disturbed. The senses awake, so that one is able to hear, to see, to smell, to feel; but motor power is abeyant, thus depriving one of the ability to move, to speak, to raise the body. While in this state, apprehensive persons are fearful indeed;

and they often wonder if the condition will last indefinitely, or recur; and if they may be pronounced dead. It is a comparatively harmless disorder, and apart from improving the general health, may be overcome by avoiding all anxiety, especially during an attack.

While the great majority of the alleged examples of premature burial are highly embellished fictions, it must be conceded that there are a few authentic cases. Most of these occurred long ago. An analysis of them reveals many quieting facts. For instance, the diagnosis of death were frequently made by laymen, not by physicians, and consequently states which to an untrained observer resemble death, as catalepsy or trance, were labelled death. Again, many of the positive signs of death, the stethoscope and other instruments of diagnostic precision, were unknown; today we possess very reliable signs of death, so that when a physician makes the diagnosis the chances of error are practically nil. Further, the diseases which led to error in the past are better understood and are more rare.

If these considerations fail to soothe, one may rest assured that the embalming process settles the question. One may, also, think of cremation. Cremation, contrary to the opinion of

many, does not consist in burning the body; in fact, no fire, smoke, objectionable odor, sight, or sound, accompanies it. The body is merely subjected to superheated air; this reduces it to ashes. Cremation is endorsed by many on economic, social, and sanitary grounds, but it is opposed by others lest its wide observance lead to disrespect for the dead, or crime. Some religious bodies do not sanction it, partly because it is supposed that it is often resorted to in an effort to defeat the dogma of the resurrection.

Allied to the fear of premature burial are various morbid thoughts which distress many nervous persons. They imagine, for example, the feeling of being confined in a coffin, of being covered with earth, of stifling for want of air, of decaying. This occupation is certainly futile and illogical, though it is usually indicative of some deeply lying mental or physical thorn, and demands medical correction. All of us might recall, however, that we can suffer pain only while we possess consciousness, while living. With life we have imagination, and are able to fancy many things; but with death imagination departs, also the sense of pain, all the senses in fact. In short, after death we have no more feeling than has a stone.

6

Many persons are unduly concerned over what may be their fate after death. There are, of course, those who believe that death ends all, and others who think that death is but the avenue to another and a better existence. The latter belief is surely the happier, and it solaces us for the joys which are denied at present. Again, it is comforting in that it leads us to expect a reunion with loved ones who have already taken the journey.

As a rule, the persons who worry about their status after death are not those guilty of serious offenses against religious laws, but those who are the least culpable. Timorous and fearful by nature, or by reason of a pedagogy which emphasized fear rather than love, and influenced probably by such purely imaginative descriptions of Hell as are to be found in Bunyan, Dante, Milton, among others, they become their own judges, and condemn themselves to everlasting punishment because of transgressions which are really trivial; indeed, the self-accusations and ideas of having committed the unpardonable sin are often based on thoughts alone. But it is a generally accepted religious principle that grievous sins only warrant con-

demnation and no sin is grievous unless performed with full knowledge of its wickedness and with full deliberation and consent. And we are told, in the Bible for instance, that even though one's sins be as scarlet they can be blotted out if one repents. The way to forgiveness and to salvation is, therefore, always open to those who seek it.

It may be comforting to the hyperconscientious to know that there is no crime on the calendar which is not possible to each of us under suitable conditions. He who has never undergone the pangs of hunger deserves no credit because he has never stolen bread; he who has not been strongly tempted has no great claim to purity. Even we human psychologists appreciate the fact that many persons are the victims of acts and of thoughts of which they are ashamed, not because of love of evil, but because of mental conflicts, complexes, emotional disturbances, abnormal physical states, and the like. We know also that there are two sides to every nature, one which urges the individual to be upright, to conduct himself in accord with social laws; the other constantly tempts him to be untrue to himself, to his associates, and asks him to gratify desires which conflict with his ideas of ethics. These thoughts which we call evil come to all

men, all women, even to saints. They come because we have bodies, because in the deeper strata of our minds we are still primitive. But we are responsible for them only in so far as we voluntarily summon them, intentionally entertain them, make no effort to subdue them. Even the degree of responsibility is a relative matter, for we all have not the same amount of resistance nor are we all exposed to the same temptations; each has his own weakness, each his own strength. That which is improper is not to be condoned lightly, of course, but the religious person may rest assured that if he is summoned before the court of judgment he will be tried by a psychologist who understands all these things, and more, and who, understanding them better than any human psychologist, will be more ready to forgive.

CHAPTER XI

THE FEAR OF SUPERSTITION

Extent of Superstition—Natural History of Superstition—Analysis of Superstitions Arising by Symbolism—Bird and Animal Superstitions—Miscellaneous Omens—The Remedy for Superstition

1

THOUGH belief in witchcraft, the evil eye, the power of curses, demoniacal possession, and the like, are, for the most part, things of the past, it is apparent that superstition still flourishes. The large number of fortune tellers, clairvoyants, astrologists, mediums affords ample proof of this. It is a fact, also, that there are countless persons who, while refraining from consulting the professional mouthpieces of the fates, attempt to decipher the future for themselves, finding in the ordinary events of daily life, many signs of grave portent; who so ordain their lives as not to offend powers beyond the ken of science or common sense; who are made anxious and fearful should they or their relatives inadvertently go counter to laws superstitious. In-

deed, not only is superstition a prominent and known cause of fear, holding millions in slavery, but there is plenty of medical evidence that it is often the basis for many pathological beliefs and acts, as well as for many nervous ailments, whose sources are hidden from the individuals.

Unfortunately, at least for scientific reasons, the exact prevalence of superstition can not be accurately determined. Mindful that belief in superstition is considered a mark of lack of culture, most people tend to deny its presence in themselves. It is not, however, confined to the so-called lower classes, as many contend. In truth, it has no social distinctions, the difference between the superstitions of the learned and of the ignorant being simply that the beliefs of the former are comparatively fewer, more secret, and less gross. Were we to ask an up-to-date soothsayer, say a clairvoyant, who formed the bulk of his or her clients, we should learn that many patrons were lawyers, artists, actors, musicians, opera singers, clergymen, presidents of banks, prominent business men. But one need not look beyond oneself. Honest self-examination will show that there is scarcely one out of a hundred who has not a belief or a practice which is of superstitious origin. We might refer to the general prejudice against the num-

ber thirteen, the aversion to going under a ladder, the custom of knocking on wood when making a boast, the habit of carrying lucky pocket pieces, the various practices made use of by card players to tempt Lady Luck. Again, there are few of us who intentionally defy superstition, who are not disturbed should something of bad omen occur, who are not careful to be on the safe side always.[1]

Superstitions are of many kinds, and they originate in many ways. They are present among all peoples, are concerned with every human belief and act, every trade and profession, every manifestation of nature, every living thing, even inanimate things. Many of them are older than history, so that their exact genesis is speculative; others can be traced into antiquity and described, but mere description is not always explanation. In general, they have proceeded from early man's ignorance and curiosity as to the nature of the forces at work about him, the awe and fear these forces inspired in him, his de-

[1] Several investigations have been made in an effort to ascertain the extent of superstition among the educated. Probably the most thorough is that of Prof. Conklin (*Amer. Jour. Psychology*, 1919, p. 83). Analysis of questionnaires submitted for four years to students beginning psychology at the University of Oregon revealed that superstitious beliefs and practices were present in 53 per cent of the group studied, in 40 per cent of the males, and in 66 per cent of the females.

sire to discover their mode of operation, and particularly his desire to have some code of action whereby their evils might be avoided. The superstitions of today are mostly modifications of the old; and such superstitutions as arise from time to time in connection with new discoveries and phenomena are based on the same primitive reasons and follow primitive modes of thought.

2

Early man, making the best use of the limited powers available to him, could see in the various activities of nature only the handiwork of invisible, supernal beings. A spirit of some kind he conceived as peculiar to practically everything. Thus, a particular spirit was responsible for lightning, thunder, rain, wind; for fire, death, disease, the growth of grass, corn, rye, trees, the light of the sun, moon, stars; in fact one tribe had as many as five hundred different gods. Some of these spirits were kindly, helpful, practically harmless. Others were very strong, and could cause great evil; this was evident in floods, storms, eclipses, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, epidemics, the blighting of crops, death. Though he occasionally dared to oppose them—exemplified by Xerxes who lashed the waves with chains for wrecking his ships,

by the ancient Gauls who charged the rising sea with drawn swords, by some savage tribes who shot arrows at the sun—early man did his best not to offend the spirits in any way; indeed, it were best to make sacrifices, human and otherwise, so that the spirits might be kept friendly, and the good will of the community demonstrated. In times of calamity, as epidemics of disease, and famine, he was particularly wont to do this, sometimes giving the human victim and scapegoat a verbal message to deliver to the angry spirit. Being always fearful, and always anxious to gain an insight into the intentions of the spirits, it was only natural that he note all actions and signs, however slight, which were preceded, accompanied, or followed by good or evil. Coincidents were thus emphasized, and numerous erroneous conclusions formed. To give a simple illustration, it was observed that there occurred a rapid growth of grass and flowers over the spot where a sacrifice had been made; this was taken to signify that the god was pleased, which belief encouraged sacrifices. Later it became customary to offer sacrifices at the planting season, and often the blood of the victims was sprinkled over the seeds to be sown. Still later, it was found that the blood of criminals, of the aged, of the sickly, of animals,

pleased the spirits just as much as did the blood of a healthy and valuable person. Today, of course, we have more faith in others forms of fertilizer.

There are many other factors which would need consideration were one to go into the natural history of superstition. For instance, superstitions were sometimes manufactured or encouraged so as to preserve respect for authority, and for the life and rights of others; this is shown in the not so ancient idea that kings were divine, that the ghost of a wronged or murdered man would haunt one. Religion, as with other mysterious and feared things, gave rise to numerous superstitions. To some extent, superstitions reflect man's hope for immortality, for superstitious forces imply the existence of supernatural agencies, and, therefore, of another world; it is rarely that a confirmed atheist or materialist places any credence in superstition. Occasionally, superstitions have had some grains of truth. For example, it is a more or less common belief that it is unlucky for a married woman to mislay, lose, or take off her wedding ring; such an occurrence is said to foretell domestic discord, usually divorce, which at times happens. The cases that prove true are understandable, sometimes by chance, sometimes by

psychological reasons. As the new school of psychology has pointed out, there is often a deep meaning in many of the apparently insignificant acts of everyday life. In the case of a woman who mislays her wedding ring, it may be that she is dissatisfied with marriage and unconsciously wishes she were free. Her mislaying of the ring reveals the desire, for the ring symbolizes union, marriage; further, the ring constantly reminds her of marriage. Should this be so, and should the marriage be terminated later, it is not surprising under the circumstances though the superstitious would assign the estrangement to the mislaying of the ring *per se*. Other explanations might be given for this particular superstition; for instance, since the wedding ring is part of the marriage, its loss or removal would, according to primitive logic, weaken the bond and might destroy the bond, something like the loss of a link weakens a chain.

While a general discussion of superstition might be interesting, it may be of more practical value to analyze the superstitions related to some one subject; understanding these, we shall have a fairly good comprehension of the origins of superstitions of all kinds, inasmuch as superstitions are closely allied to one another.

For our purposes we shall consider so-called death superstitions. Formerly, there were many hundreds of these, most of which have, with increased experience and intelligence, been discarded, or modified to portend some indefinite rather than definite bad fortune. Quite a number still exist, which goes to show that primitive-mindedness is not entirely a matter of racial age but of mental development.

For convenience of description we shall divide some of the more representative omens into three groups, and discuss each group separately. The omens given are said to foretell the death of, or at least some bad luck to, the one who experiences them or someone related to him. They are supposed to be very significant should a member of the family be ailing at the time of their occurrence.

3

To open an umbrella in the house; to meet a funeral; to dream of a coffin; to see a shooting star; to hear an imaginary knock on the door; to lie down on a table; to play at having funerals; to marry in red (husband will die); when a picture, window shade, or other article falls from a high place; when a clock stops suddenly; when a spark flies out of the stove; when a candle burns blue; when it rains during a funeral. The setting sun, the last quarter of the moon, the outgoing tide, the coming on of a storm, falling leaves, are supposed to be critical periods for, or to hasten the death of,

one who is seriously ill; readers of Dickens may recall the picture of Barkis going out with the tide.

Death is, in the above superstitions, supposedly foretold by analogy, symbolism, or resemblance. The reasoning employed is practically similar to the so-called sympathetic magic of primitive man. Early man thought that if he imitated on a small scale, or if the imitation took place spontaneously or accidentally, certain things which were typical of definite phenomena the latter might be produced. He noted, for instance, that rain was accompanied by flashes of fire in the sky, by roaring sounds, darkness. If he wished rain, he knocked firebrands together, so as to imitate lightning, sprinkled water from tree-tops to imitate rain, drummed on a kettle to imitate thunder, held up a black skin, or walked a black animal up and down, to imitate darkness. By doing these things he fully expected that rain would come; indeed, he need but do one of these things. If he desired wind, he blew with his breath, or flapped blankets, or waved branches of trees. If he wanted the sun to come out, he kindled a fire. If a woman would not have him, he chewed a hard piece of wood; both the woman's heart and the piece of wood were hard, and by softening the one he thought that he could soften the other.

To become strong he ate the heart of a lion or of a courageous enemy.

These ideas may strike us as ridiculous and laughable, but without reason if we heed the superstitions mentioned. The logic of the two is, as stated, not dissimilar. Thus, rain resembles tears; tears mean sadness; one is sad at death; by raising an umbrella one invites rain; and by raising it in the house one invites rain, hence tears, death, into the house. When one tries on mourning, plays at having funerals, lies down on a table (on which corpses were once laid out), one imitates factors concerned with death, and, according to crooked reasoning, invites death. When one hears an imaginary knock on the door the spirit of death, which is invisible, is supposedly calling one. Death is like unto a fall; hence, the falling of a picture means the fall of someone in the household. Life is like a spark; if the spark goes out one dies; therefore, the spark flying out of the stove indicates the flying of the spark of life. A coffin and a funeral also symbolize death; consequently, a dream in which either occurs can mean only death.

Surely, no person, unless he has a large archaic spot in his thinking apparatus, can champion such notions. It is certainly the

height of absurdity to contend that death is a spirit which, if imitated in any way, even inadvertently, is certain to vent its wrath upon him. Nor is there any reason to believe that inanimate objects as stars, bread, clocks, window shades have intelligence, especially supernormal intelligence, and are able to foresee our misfortune. We may, with some sanity, infer that a Divine Being can control them, but it is more rational to think that if this force desired to give forewarning of His intentons, He would do so in a definite and an unmistakable manner, rather than in such vague and underhanded ways as mentioned.

Analogy probably plays the major rôle in accounting for superstitions in general. It enters into many trades and customs of daily life. There are, for instance, farm-hands who think that butter will come faster if one dances around the churn. Many persons will not make gifts of knives or of other sharp instruments; since these are capable of cutting, they may cut friendship. Others will not go between posts; if they do, something may come between them, break their friendship. A knife and fork found crossed on the table mean crosses, sorrow. The bride is distressed if it rains on her wedding day, and if the wedding party meets a funeral;

these are sure indications of marital unhappiness. Though few of us are aware of the original meaning of the practice, the bride is showered with rice (or confetti) so that she may be fertile, as rice is. According to household medicine, red rose, being red like blood, is good for blood diseases; dandelions, which have yellow blossoms, are good for jaundice and liver complaints; walnuts, since they are shaped like the brain, are good for brain troubles. The young mother believes that she should take the baby upstairs first, and not down; this will ensure its going up in the world. If the baby keeps its hands clenched she fears that it will become tight-fisted, miserly; the hands should be kept open, for this favors liberality. The finger-nails should not be cut too soon, nor short, else the baby will be light-fingered and a thief. A male baby's cord should be left long, so that the child will be virile when it grows up. The expectant mother should not raise her arms above her head, because this twists the cord around the baby's neck. She must not eat anything while nursing the child, else the child will strangle. And so on *ad infinitum et ad nauseam.*

4

A bird flying in a window; cows trampling a garden; cows mooing at night; owls, ravens, crows screeching at night; sharks following a ship; vultures and wolves following travelers; dogs barking at night.

Here we have superstitions concerned with birds, animals, fishes, all of which have, in every period of history, been credited with prescient powers. The superstitions associated with them are mostly due to this fact.

In olden times it was thought that the soul of man, after death, entered the bodies of other creatures; the belief still endures among the acceptors of the theory of the transmigration of souls. Of all creatures it was supposed to favor the bodies of birds. The soul was also likened to a bird, the latter's flight being swift and upward. Consequently, it was assumed that the bird which flew into one's room was the bird into which one's soul was to pass; the bird came because it was after one's soul; one's time was at hand.

Cows were once considered gods, were venerated, and offered sacrifices. When they trampled a garden it signified their quest of homage or their displeasure; only the death of a family member could propitiate them. Their mooing at night, especially in the stilly hours when fear

is naturally easy to rouse, is mournful, and to an apprehensive and imaginative person has a sinister meaning. Should someone happen to be sick at the time, and should death occur, the omen is given weight; doubtless it is because of occasional coincidents that such superstitions take root. Practically the same can be said of owls, crows, ravens—that is, their voices at night are dismal and weird.

There are any number of superstitions concerned with the sea and with sailors, but probably none which has a greater hold than the shark omen. The sea naturally tends to generate fear. As H. Irving King has said, lonely midnight seas, howling tempests, weird maritime phenomena, the insignificance of ship and crew in the vast expanse of sea and sky—all help to promote a superstitious state of mind. A shark is an unlovely creature, and thoughts of being devoured by it are far from agreeable. Should a shark follow a ship for days, especially when the voyage is long and land not in sight, and when monotony has unnerved the sailor, the latter can only read something inauspicious in it. Since death, particularly his own death, would be the most dread event possible, he concludes that this is the meaning. However, sharks follow ships for the same rea-

son that gulls do, namely, to procure the food which the cook discards. This is an unsatisfactory explanation to the sailor, who points to the few "true" cases which he has heard of, and disregards the fact that hundreds of deaths and hundreds of wrecks have occurred without any sharks having been seen before, during, or after the catastrophes.

Vultures and wolves are said to see or to smell death. We prefer to believe that they stay in the wake of travelers in quest of food. Their sense of smell is not especially keen, at any rate. For example, vultures—which eat strongly scented food—ignore carrion which is placed in a covered box that does not prevent the escape of the odor.

It will be difficult, if not impossible, to disabuse the minds of most people that dogs do not possess some mysterious foreknowledge of death. The ancient Aryans thought that dogs could see ghosts; a similar idea is to be found in the Iliad; some hold the same view today. Other people think that dogs can scent death.

If we maintain that dogs bark at night because they see death, we must assume that there is a death spirit, visible to dogs, which hovers about the neighborhood where death is soon to take place, or that there is some kind of a wraith

which disengages itself from the body of the person about to die. So far no one has made out a good case in support of either of these views, and until someone does so it is prudent to suspend judgment. Were there such a spirit, one might expect that dogs would always bark prior to a human's death, but countless instances to the contrary are easily procured. Again, the vision of dogs is not so good as that of many common birds, and if "ghosts" frighten dogs, they should frighten birds also; no one, however, gives birds the same credit. Their sense of smell is keen; this, together with their acute vision, enables them to discover dead bodies more readily than man can discover them, and may have some bearing in accounting for the theory that dogs are experts on death. Death has not a peculiar odor, though there are occasional instances, especially in certain diseases and when ventilation is poor, when a physician can tell by the odor that death is in the offing. At any rate, it does not seem plausible that an odor unappreciable to those at the bedside would be carried blocks away, to annoy an innocent dog; and very unlikely is it that dogs can scent the death of persons in the best of health. But we are told that "dogs can scent death even before it seizes a person."

Dogs, we might add, bark for many reasons at night, chiefly because they are easily alarmed and are light sleepers. They bark in the daytime more often. And they bark with their heads upwards, sideways, and downwards. It is supposed to be a very bad prognostic should a dog bark and look downwards. It is as if the dog said: "You, or someone related to you, will soon be in the ground."

We might add, too, that the dog is probably the most loyal of all creatures, and of all animals the foremost in man's regard. The large number of poems and stories written about the dog, and their popularity, afford some proof of this. A dog always lets you know just how it feels toward you; it either likes you or dislikes you and you know it; unlike many of its biped superiors in intelligence, it does not smile and flatter when its heart is being eaten by venom. And as the old Sheik said, in effect, your friend of twenty years standing will cast you aside for a trifle, but a dog, though you belabor it, will never forget the crust you gave it. It is understandable, therefore, that man, as a token of his appreciation, and possibly to justify his deep regard for the lowly creature, should be inclined to endow it with special gifts. It is also understandable that a dog, denied the accustomed

companionship of its sick master, should bark, act strangely, and be inconsolable; again, that the master should sometimes die following these actions. It is, as stated, quite natural, though to the imaginative, who see things differently, it is quite supernatural indeed.

5

To hold a lamp over a sleeping or sick person, especially an infant; to move a sick person from one bed to another; when a baby sneezes; to break a mirror; to spill salt; when a clock strikes thirteen, when thirteen are at table, to occupy room number thirteen; to see blossoms out of season; to carry a hoe, spade, or other iron implement through the house; to see a new comet.

The above superstitions are miscellaneous in nature and origin.

Primitive people thought that the soul absented itself from the body during sleep; sleep was due to this fact; dreams were real and represented the actual experiences of the soul. If one held a lamp over a sleeping person the soul, which may have been about to return, became frightened, and might fly away, never to come back; if so, death ensued. Under no circumstances should a sleeping or an unconscious person be moved, because the soul might not be able to discover the body's new location. An infant's soul was supposedly not very securely

attached to the infant nor well acquainted with its habitat; it was, therefore more easily frightened away or lost. In sickness the soul was loosed from its moorings, so to speak, and such a thing as moving the sick person might detach it entirely, or jolt it out of the body. Among some tribes it used to be the custom to place rice and other foods on the head of the sick person so as to tempt the soul to remain; indeed, some even went so far as to plug up all the body's apertures (the nose, ears, mouth, etc.) so that the soul could not possibly get out. Parenthetically, it is considered a bad sign by many medical men when a very sick person wishes to be changed from bed to bed; and of course it is always hazardous to move a seriously ill person since the exertion entailed may be too much for the person to withstand.

Early man thought that when one sneezed the soul left the body; if it did not quickly return the devil, or evil spirits with which the air was filled and which were constantly trying to enter one, especially through the mouth, might take its place. To ward off the evil ones, people were accustomed to make use of charms of various kinds. Spitting was considered an effective way to get rid of the evil spirits; the present-day practice of spitting for luck, or

before attempting a task is traceable to this belief. Among Christians, the making of the sign of the cross, the sprinkling of holy water, the saying of "God bless you," were potent preventives. A baby's sneeze was dangerous because the soul was insecure; also, the baby was weak physically and the devil could enter and kill it comparatively easily.

Again, it was thought that a man's soul was in his reflection, and anything which once held his reflection always retained part of him. It was, consequently, very serious to break a mirror, because he thereby broke his soul or sent it away. It was also considered an invitation to misfortune not to turn mirrors, as well as pictures of living persons, to the wall (or to cover them up) after a death in the house, because the ghost of the dead person, which was said to linger about the premises for a few days, might entice one's soul away; of course if one's soul went its owner would too. Some present-day brides think that it augers badly if, on leaving for their wedding, they look in a mirror; by doing so they leave part of themselves at home, when they should completely sever home ties.

The belief that it is unlucky to break a mirror has another possible origin. In early days mirrors were very expensive; as a rule, it took the

savings of many years, about seven, to purchase one. If a person broke a mirror he was out of luck; for seven years he would have to scrimp and save if he desired to buy another.

Salt was at one time very precious because of its rarity. It was symbolic of friendship, and was offered to the gods as tribute. To spill it indicated the spilling (breaking) of friendship; it offended the gods also, who might vent their wrath upon one.

All the superstitions connected with the number thirteen are traceable to the Christian religion. Christ plus His twelve apostles number thirteen. One of these was a traitor, caused the death of his Master, and killed himself. Thirteen at table is a bad omen because the dread events happened after the Last Supper when thirteen were at table. Friday the thirteenth is doubly unpropitious because Christ died on Friday. Whether significant or not, and it probably is, very few steamships will start a voyage on Friday, nor will many actors begin a new play on this day.

When blossoms occur out of season the weather is variable. Colds and other ills which may prove serious are not unlikely.

All iron implements were introduced very slowly. The Jews refused to use them in build-

ing the temple at Jerusalem. According to Sir J. G. Frazer, whose studies of primitive beliefs are classics, all new things were viewed with distrust, and all untoward events after their introduction were attributed to them. Since spades are used in digging graves, the carrying of a spade through the house might indicate, by analogy, the digging of a grave for someone in that house.

If the appearance of a strange heavenly body such as a comet should have caused apprehension when celestial phenomena were not well understood, it is not surprising. Sometimes it presaged an indefinite evil; sometimes it was taken to augur famine or war, and prayers were offered in the churches to offset it. With the growth of Christianity, and especially in the Middle Ages, a comet was a sign of the end of the world, and of the second coming of Christ as described in the Gospels. Some looked upon a comet as an agent sent by a wrathful God against a bad world; and it might be mentioned that not so many years ago lightning was regarded as a manifestation of divine displeasure; that windstorms were supposed to be agents of the evil spirits on which they rode; that the stars were said to be hung out at night and taken in during the day; that great objections were raised

to ether, chloroform, and similar pain-removing things because God wished us to suffer. There have been many times when celestial phenomena caused large numbers of people to believe that their doom was at hand. A famous instance of this kind occurred in 1720, when Whiston, an English clergyman and astronomer, predicted the appearance of a comet and the end of the world a few days later. The comet arrived as scheduled, whereupon religious services were held all over the island, worldly goods were given away, and thinking that the water offered the most safety, people took to boats. Needless to state, nothing happened. Similar panics, on smaller scales, still take place, as was evident on the last appearance of Halley's comet.

6

In conclusion, it would profit all of us were we to cast off all superstitious beliefs and practices. This applies forcibly in case we tend to be nervous and fearful. Superstition is a variety of fear, a breeder of fear; and, as Addison says, there is nothing so inconsiderable which may not appear dreadful to an imagination which is filled with omens and prognostics. Were we living in a primitive age, superstition could be forgiven; so, also, if superstition

explained anything. It explains nothing; all such things as it attempts to account for are ascribable, when the superstition has a grain of verity—which is rarely—to facts more in agreement with science and reason.

It is safe to say that an acquaintance with the birth of superstition would convince us of its falsity, its sandy foundations, and would help us to rout it. This acquaintance may be formed through books procurable at most public libraries. Even better, probably, would be a careful study of our personal superstitions; this would demonstrate that very few omens were fulfilled; were superstition based on natural or supernatural laws, its agreement with future events should be the rule and not the exception. If we make a study of this kind it is important that we be unbiased, else, like the rabidly superstitious, the failure of an omen will only mean that something has occurred to neutralize the evil, and we shall be just as fearful in the future. Again, we must give chance its full value. Chance may not, and does not, explain all strange occurrences, yet it operates more than we concede; the trouble is that we disregard it when it is not concerned with the dramatic. During the 1921 Armistice Day exercises a dove, the symbol of peace, flew into

several churches where services were being held. On a certain day when Senator Lodge was warning his colleagues that a failure to ratify the Disarmament Treaty would lead to war, a cloud momentarily darkened the Senate. To many persons these incidents are very impressive, but were one to investigate one would find that doves fly into churches and that clouds darken the Senate when nothing of moment is going on.[1]

While we have advised personal study as a means of conquering superstition, unfortunately neither this nor any other method will rout it entirely once it becomes fastened in one's mind; even when apparently dislodged it tends to reappear, especially in times of mental stress. If it is to be overcome, the best place to begin is in childhood, and here, as elsewhere, example is

[1] An interesting event which shows how superstitions are generated and accentuated is the following: In 1819 a Vermont farmer named Boorn dreamt that Louis Colvin, who had disappeared six years previously, appeared to him, claiming that he (Colvin) had been murdered by Boorn's two nephews; he asked that justice be done. The dream was communicated to the authorities who, after a period of scepticism, arrested the nephews. The latter at first denied the alleged crime but later confessed. They were tried, and on pleading guilty were sentenced to death. Shortly before the time set for the execution Colvin returned, alive and well. The nephews then repudiated their confession, but could not or would not give any explanation. If, as might easily have happened, Colvin did not return, the dream would have been continually cited as infallible proof of the supernormality of dreams; but since the facts are as they are, the dream receives little attention.

better than precept. It is true that children are apparently predisposed to superstition, as may be seen in their personification of objects ("Rain, rain go away," etc.), but it is parental example and social suggestion rather than hereditary habits of thought and association with the ignorant which are mainly responsible for its growth. This point is well demonstrated by Conklin's report; eighty-four per cent of his subjects attributed their superstitions to parents, elders, and social contacts. The prevalence of superstition among females, who are also more exposed to nervousness, should indicate the necessity of being particularly careful with the girl members of the family.

CHAPTER XII

THE FEAR OF HEREDITY

Traits Wrongly Considered Hereditary—Cancer, Tuberculosis, Negroid Features, Telogony—Definitely Inheritable Defects and Their Prevention—What to Do When Hereditary Ills Appear—Care of Persons Predisposed to Hereditary Defects—The Jukes

1

TODAY every well-informed person knows that the mental and physical make-up of an individual is not inexplicable, uncontrollable, or a matter of mere luck, but is dependent upon definite, natural laws, namely, the laws of heredity. And if we will give due weight to this fact, as well as to the right of every child to be well-born and to the happiness we expect to find in our children, we will concede that it is our moral duty to pay attention to the subject, before marriage rather than after. Unfortunately, those who are heavily laden with familial defects are mentally incapable of, or are unmoved by, such considerations; while, on the other hand,

thousands whose family stocks are comparatively free of taint, but who are unduly conscientious and apprehensive, are greatly disturbed by heredity's possibilities for harm. It is the latter group of persons that we hope to reach here.

The first counsel to those who worry about heredity is that they gain a good idea as to what impairments are strictly hereditary and what are not. The misconceptions on this score are very numerous. For example, we often hear people say that they have weak backs, weak stomachs, headache, constipation, neuritis, dislikes for certain foods, and so on, because their fathers or mothers were similarly troubled. We find others who are distressed, both for themselves and for their offsprings, because a near or a remote relative was immoral, a vagabond, a gambler, a forger, a thief, a ne'er-do-well, a drunkard, a suicide.

There are, of course, some extremists who contend that practically every evil under the sun is traceable to heredity, and can be controlled in no other way than by the employment of eugenic methods. And it must be admitted that there is scarcely any disease or tendency that can not, at times, act in an hereditary manner; a susceptibility to poisoning from eggs, for in-

stance, has been present in the male members of a certain family through four generations. But the opinions of the few should not be accepted as the reflection of the beliefs of the majority, nor should the fact that an impairment may be hereditary lead us to assume that it is so always.

Within the past ten years our views as to so-called hereditary defects have been profoundly modified. No longer are we prone to consider the existence of a certain trait in parent and child as infallible proof of the trait's hereditary nature, any more than we accept as such the presence of the same religious and political tenets. Increased knowledge has shown us that heredity has been made the scapegoat for numerous ailments whose causes were unknown; when the blame could not be placed elsewhere, it was a convenient cloak for ignorance to bring in heredity. Again, the newer methods of psychology, and practical experience in the treatment of patients, have forcibly impressed us with the fact that a great many of the parents' traits are transmitted to the child, not through the germ plasm, but through the child's imitation of the parents, through suggestion received in childhood, the most impressionable period in life. This has been proved true of such dis-

orders as hysteria, nervousness in general, fainting attacks, headache, tremors, functional heart troubles, dyspepsia, among many others. It has been demonstrated in the case of such desirable traits as industry, perseverance, honesty, optimism, and of such undesirable traits as anger, sadness, envy, bitterness, lying, to mention but a few. As for vice, this is rarely, if ever, inherited as such; at the most, one merely inherits a predisposition toward vice. And in the vast majority of cases of vice it is probably true that faulty child-training, poor environment, physical ills, mental conflicts of various kinds play more important parts than inherited tendencies.

It is safe to say that most of the defects popularly ascribed to heredity are not hereditary, or very slightly so. This point is important; first, because it helps to rob heredity of many of its false terrors; and second, because it may stimulate those suffering from supposed hereditary ills to seek relief. Many persons think that anything which is inherited is irremovable; they therefore accept certain maladies as things which must be endured because they can not be cured. Many are honest in their beliefs, but others use heredity as an excuse for lack of will-power and self-help. As we hope to show later, there are few impairments, even though really

inherited, which can not be controlled or cured; when one's impairments are not inherited they are still more open to correction.

2

There are several diseases, greatly prevalent and feared, and believed to be inherited by many, about which it may be well to say a few words.

One of these diseases is cancer. As far as can be discovered, cancer is not a germ-borne disease nor is it contagious; there should be no fear, therefore, should one come in contact with a cancer patient, or if one is called upon to care for a sufferer. Of its cause we know little; the arguments of those who assert that it is due to faulty diet, poisoning, etc., should be considered as pure speculation. We do know with certainty that it is not inherited; its occasional occurrence in relatives is merely a coincidence. Were there the least doubt about its non-inheritable nature, we might be sure that insurance companies would pay attention to a history of cancer in the family, but practically all these companies disregard the fact. Further proof that cancer is not inherited may be found in a report of a committee of life insurance companies in cooperation with the American Society for the Control of Cancer (*Insurance,*

Dec. 22, 1916). Among other things, the committee states that of 22,000 applicants for life insurance whose parents had both died of cancer only four had cancer. If cancer were inherited, it would act with more frequency than the above statistics indicate.

Another disease thought to be inherited is tuberculosis. Very rarely is a child born with this malady. As a rule, the child of a tuberculous mother is born frail, owing to the mother's weakened condition. Since the lungs of the new-born child are not well-developed, and since the child is kept in an environment rife with germs, it is no wonder that it acquires the disease. Were the child taken from the mother, directly after birth, it is probable that it would remain free of tuberculosis. This point is corroborated by Bernard and Debré who, from a study of 123 infants whose mothers had tuberculosis, conclude that the infants do not inevitably contract the disease at once. Some were saved even after eight days to three months of contact with the mothers. None failed to become infected after six months of contact. Contaminated infants almost all died after being taken away from the parent, even though they seemed to be healthy.

For the benefit of a few who secretly worry

about the matter, we might answer the following question here: In case a white person has a strain of colored blood, is there any danger of his or her begetting a Negroid child? Nothing is impossible, of course, but if the person marries into pure white families the chances are very slight. A person of one-eighth colored blood is considered across the line in so far as skin color is concerned. Such Negro traits as kinky hair and thick lips disappear more slowly.

It may be well, also, to notice this query: If a woman has her first child by, or first sexual relation with, a man of a certain color or race, will her children by another husband resemble the first husband? Among some animal breeders it is thought that the first sire influences, in some peculiar way, the dam, so that the latter's offsprings will always show, to some degree, the traits of the first mate. The soundness of this belief (called telogony) is very questionable. Experiments, such as those of Ewart with zebras and horses, and statistical investigations, fail to support it. Again, in daily life one does not find that the children of those who marry the second time bear any resemblance to the first husband.

3

Coming to impairments which are frequently hereditary. When these exist in the family the chief concern is whether it is possible to have perfectly normal children. The answer depends upon many things, but chiefly upon whether the undesirable trait acts as a dominant or as a recessive. A dominant trait may be defined as one which, when present in a person, is almost certain to be passed on to some of his (or her) offsprings, no matter how sound mentally and physically one's mate may be. A recessive trait, on the other hand, is one which tends to be overcome by normality; one which can be kept abeyant, and finally eradicated, by marriage into families free from that defect.

There are a number of diseases which often act in dominant fashion. Among them are polydactylism (an excessive number of fingers or toes); congenital cataract (not the usual type due to age, injury, etc.); certain forms of atrophy of the nerve of sight; certain types of muscular wasting; some forms of watery diabetes; some forms of night blindness (an inability to see by artificial light; it often terminates in complete blindness); and Huntington's Chorea (a disease of the adult nervous system which usually ends in dementia).

A person who has any of these maladies on a hereditary basis, who marries and has children, is practically sure to have some of his or her children similarly afflicted. Since most of the defects which act as dominants are serious and incapacitating, the afflicted person should not marry. In general, no restrictions are placed upon the marriage of the other members of the family, provided they are healthy, though marriage to relatives is to be avoided. In some cases it is charitable to postpone or to forego marriage when dominant defects are known to exist in the family line. For example, some dominant defects, as Huntington's Chorea, do not manifest themselves until the middle period of life (thirty-five or later). Until this age has been passed it is usually impossible to tell which members of the family are not subject to the disease, and thus free to marry, and which are subject to it, and so not free to marry. Where any doubt exists, if not in every case where familial defect is present, it is best to consult a competent eugenicist so that the peculiarities of each problem may be worked out.

The hopeful side of heredity lies in the fact that dominant defects are comparatively rare, and that nature, if given a chance, will purify herself. The majority of hereditary ills act as

recessives, and, therefore, when a familial deficiency exists it can generally be prevented from appearing in the issue by marriage into families in which that deficiency is absent.

Among defects which act as recessives are feeble-mindedness, insanity, epilepsy, most forms of hereditary nervousness, deaf-mutism, alkaptonuria (the passage of dark urine). Some of these maladies are somewhat related, such as feeble-mindedness, insanity, epilepsy, so that when any one of them is present in the family line it is best to avoid marriage into families where any form of hereditary nervousness exists. If, however, it can be shown that one of these impairments is present in a family into which one desires to marry, but is not present on a hereditary basis, there need be no fear about marrying into that family. In these cases the germ cells do not carry the undesirable trait, and so it can not be passed on. Many of us seem to forget that all of the above-mentioned maladies, and particularly insanity, feeble-mindedness, and epilepsy may be due to many causes besides heredity, such as injury, toxemia, cerebral hemorrhage, disease in early life; indeed, in sixty per cent or better, these ills are of extra-hereditary origin. We should not be so prone to assume, therefore, that their existence

in a family indicates that the family is hereditarily blemished; such an attitude often causes unjust and keen pain to persons whose family stock is much better than that of their critics.

Cousin marriages however remote the relationship, are always to be avoided when hereditary ills exist in the family line, otherwise some of the issue are almost certain to be affected since they receive a double inheritance of defect. When the stock is pure, or has no serious defect, there is no valid contraindication to cousin marriages. We have many laws, ecclesiastical and civil, against cousin marriages *per se,* but in many instances cousin marriages are much more desirable than those of unrelated persons whose family lines are heavily burdened with taint, yet to which church and state raise no objections.

By judicious mating, then, one who has a latent or an actual hereditary impairment may expect to prevent its appearance in the children. And such a mating is perfectly possible. One is not asked to cast out love, but to have a love which is true and unselfish, which has the welfare of the race and the happiness of one's progeny at heart. Nor is one urged to seek perfection; simply a mate who possesses a maximum of good traits, especially traits in which

one is deficient. The contentions of some misguided individuals that instruction along these lines is futile, and that eugenic marriages would cause a great loss of future geniuses, should not be taken seriously; they spring from motives which are far from altruism. It may be that some really great men and women have proceeded from abnormal ancestry; but what of their happiness? None of us would exchange peace of mind for intellectual or pecuniary wealth; were we to read the lives of the afflicted mortals who are often held out as a defy to eugenics, we should learn that their sufferings were intense, that they would gladly have exchanged places with the humble yet contented laborer in the streets. We have no right to gamble with anyone's welfare, and since it is within our power to safeguard our children's health, we can not but feel morally guilty if, through ignorance, apathy, or selfishness, we afflict them with ills which might have been prevented.

4

But suppose one has already married, and has children who are apparently the victims of a poor heredity; or, though the children appear to be normal, one fears that they may later show a familial deficiency.

In the first case, the best thing to do is to take the child, even the adult relative, to a physician possessing adequate knowledge of heredity and of diagnosis so that the cause and the nature of the impairment may be discovered. The importance of seeking an expert is worth emphasis, for there are many persons who profess to be experts who are not experts in fact; this applies particularly to certain lay teachers who diagnose various mental defects, especially feeble-mindedness, solely by the results of so-called mental tests; the possible influence of physical, psychic, and other factors is disregarded or minimized.

When one consults the expert one should be frank about the family history. Unfortunately, many parents are inclined to resent inquiry of this sort, even willfully to mislead the physician; sometimes, indeed, they change physicians. Questions about one's family are not asked out of idle curiosity, but because they have a bearing upon the diagnosis and treatment. Of course, a person may rest assured that all he tells the physician professionally is held in the strictest confidence.

Should the expert decide that the ill is hereditary, then you must accept the fact, however painful the knowledge may be. If you "can't

believe it," or are convinced that a mistake has been made, then obtain the opinions of several qualified experts; if all agree, the assigned cause must be the true one. You need not reveal all the facts in the case to "nosey" busybodies, or to anyone outside the family circle, if so disposed, but at least you must be honest with yourself. Further, trust the expert's judgment as to the type of malady present. If he says that the child is feeble-minded, then do not insist that the child is merely backward; if he says that the case is epilepsy, then do not contend that the child is only excitable and subject to nervous spells; if he says that definite mental illness exists, then do not believe that it is nothing but nervousness. The amount of harm done by relatives who refuse to face the truth is very great. Instead of instituting prompt and efficient treatment, they waste hundreds of dollars and precious years in experimenting with alleged remedies or with medical charlatans, hoping against hope that the trouble will be outgrown, that a physician who "understands" the case will be found. As a result, the relative degenerates, and is rendered incurable. For years the medical profession has been preaching the gospel that many ills popularly deemed incurable do not merit this classification; it mat-

ters comparatively little whether the disease is hereditary. For example, the disease most feared, and the one considered by the average man as hopeless, is insanity. Yet if the insane are given early and suitable treatment two out of three will recover. This percentage is higher than that of many physical ailments; insanity should, therefore, be placed on the same basis as somatic disorders, say typhoid fever, and should be regarded as a curable malady. Were a typhoid sufferer to be neglected, his outlook for recovery would not be good; so with those having mental afflictions. Another serious ill is epilepsy; but if the epileptic obtain early care and the right therapy, at least thirty per cent can be cured, and forty per cent can be greatly benefited. Without early and suitable treatment they degenerate mentally and physically, so much so often as to pass beyond all help.

Just what form of treatment the expert will advise will depend upon the peculiarities of each case. The ailment may not be serious, may be curable, and home care may be sufficient. It may be advisable to send the sufferer to an institution. This suggestion is not always taken kindly, especially if a public institution is recommended; indeed, it is acted upon in many instances only after all other means fail, and

after the waste of precious years. The objections offered to institutions are many. Some people think that their social standing is lowered by having a relative in the care of the state; here false pride, ego come first; the relative's health and happiness are sacrificed on the altar of valueless public opinion. The majority, probably, have the impression that the wards of the state are neglected and abused. This notion is utterly unsound; as a matter of fact, the inmates of public institutions are well cared for, and are treated with kindness. The writer is able to verify this statement by reason of almost ten years of institutional work.

Parenthetically, it might be urged upon all of us to take a more intelligent attitude toward our state institutions, especially toward hospitals for the mentally ill. If a man has an attack of appendicitis, of pneumonia, he has, as a rule, little objection to entering a general hospital. But if he suffers a nervous breakdown, or is beset by severe worries and the like, he feels that he has no place to go. The general hospitals do not treat many of these cases; unless well-off financially the private hospitals are closed to him. The thought of entering a state hospital is repugnant to him, for most people think that only the insane are treated there,

that a stigma it attached to them. The fact is that these hospitals treat numerous nervous ailments which have nothing in common with insanity and which will never cause insanity; again, one can enter them voluntarily, without court procedure. And though few of us are aware of it, they discharge as cured a great many of their patients; they would cure more were people inclined to take early advantage of them. They are really the most desirable refuges for the mentally troubled whose finances are limited; their environments are ideal; they have physicians and nurses skilled by reason of years of special attention to nervous disorders; their scientific equipment is the best. The notion that a stigma is attached to them is believed only by the ignorant, for intelligent people know, among other things, that mental illness is as natural as physical illness, that it is not an infallible sign of family blemish, that it is not a punishment from Heaven, and that it does not invariably leave a stamp of peculiarity upon one.

Let us, then, encourage the mentally ill to have recourse to their state hospitals, and to look upon them as they do upon general hospitals—that is, as medical and curative. Let us do all we can to have more of these hospitals

built; we have sufficient for the repair of broken bones or broken physical organs, but not nearly enough for the repair of broken minds. Finally, let us not be so prone to ridicule the insane, not only by word of mouth or gesture, but also by exaggerated and false portrayals in books, and upon the stage or screen. To picture the insane as objects of laughter, or as persons to be greatly feared, is a moral crime; more than this, it gives the reader or the beholder very erroneous ideas concerning what constitutes insanity. No one would laugh at a man wounded in body, or ill with fever; the insane are sick people, wounded in the most grievous place of all—the mind—and deserve the greatest sympathy and kindness. Some of the most valued benefits to humanity have come from persons who, by modern methods of diagnosis, would be adjudged insane or semi-insane. Again, since it is possible for anyone to become insane, say through accident or acquired disease, we should show unto them the same consideration we would wish for were our mental health to be lost.

5

If the children are normal, there is nothing gained by considering possibilities as probabilities, nor probabilities as actualities. It may be

that the children will always be normal. The Mendelian principles of heredity have been carefully studied in plants and animals which can be segregated and the results of experiments noted over many generations; but the human family is more complex and is not open to the same research. Our knowledge of human heredity is not, therefore, so definite as we wish for, nor sufficient to justify in many cases any dogmatic assertions as to what is sure to happen in any given mating. And after all, the chance element plays some rôle; out of thousands of parental germ cells but two go to form the make-up of each child, and since each cell differs from the others, each child represents but one of a thousand or more possible combinations of traits. Again, the further removed the defect in the family line the less cause is there for concern, especially if intermarriage is not practiced; for instance, if the defect is present in the cousins. It might be mentioned, also, that in fifty per cent or so of families in which hereditary ills exist the issues remain free.

Hope alone is not a good structure on which to build; like prayer, it should be reinforced by good work, by personal effort. Therefore, if one entertains any doubts it is prudent to train the child so that it will be able to overcome any

familial tendency that may exist. Inherited deficiencies are not generally inherited as such. What is inherited is a predisposition toward them, and in order for the defect to occur it is necessary that an exciting cause operate. The object should be, therefore, either to protect the child from possible inciting factors, or, better, to strengthen its powers of resistance, thus enabling it to withstand the strains of modern life. True, there are some instances where training is fruitless, but it proves its worth in the majority of cases. We can afford to be sceptical toward those schools of philosophers who would have us believe that our characters are immutable, that inherited tendencies will invariably reveal themselves and are uncontrollable. Were their reasoning true, all personal effort would be practically valueless, but we know from experience that there are few natures not open to beneficial modification.

The training of the child is a duty which falls largely upon the mother. If the mother has employed foresight, she will have given the child the very best prenatal hygiene. During infancy and childhood she will strengthen it by proper food, adequate rest, sleep, play, fresh air. She will not needlessly expose it to the children's diseases; if the latter are contracted, they will

receive prompt medical care. Mindful that the parents' actions and temperaments influence the child, she will avoid manifestations of nervousness in the child's presence, of sadness, worry, pessimism, superstition. She will not be unduly affectionate, nor sympathetic, especially when the child is ill. Every effort will be made to give the child a beautiful view of life, and to build its will-power, decision, courage, ability to adjust itself without nervousness to perplexities as they arise; the upbringing will be protected but not too much so, because excesses in any direction have their evils. The child will not be made a prey of fear, as by threats, by shutting it in dark cellars, by weird stories; and such abnormal fears as appear will be explained, not ignored. Perfect frankness will be invited in all things, so that the child will feel free to talk about its problems rather than to repress them. The sexual life will be given careful oversight. No attempt will be made to force the child at school, nor, in later life, to thrust it into callings which are disliked, which cause great effort; of all occupations, those which are enjoyed and which are free from mental strain will be preferred. If signs of nervousness or character abnormality appear—such as bed-wetting, sleep-walking, night terrors, tics, chorea,

spasms, moodiness, love of solitude, fits of temper—they will be brought to the physician's notice without delay. Particular care will be exercised at puberty and adolescence; at these times physiological changes occur which sometimes border on the abnormal. When the child is old enough it will be told, without exaggeration and without inculcating fear, the necessity of its observing physical and mental hygiene, of a well-ordered life devoid of anxiety. It will be encouraged to take pride in its family, to avoid sexual and other transgressions, to make itself worthy of marriage into families of good stock. Finally, it will be urged to seek the physician early should body or mind be troubled, and not to be averse to resorting to the public clinics for mental hygiene, and to the hospitals for mental diseases, if the circumstances warrant.

6

Heredity is not, then, a sufficient cause for anxiety. The majority of us come from good stock, even though we may not be able to say our ancestors came over on the *Mayflower;* in fact, spreading family trees, social position, wealth are not in themselves indices of good family stock, for many of these families are more defective than those of persons who labor

in the ordinary walks of life, and who can not or care not to boast about their antecedents. And since we have been favored, it should be our aim to preserve and to improve our inheritance, both by exercising reasonable care in the choice of a mate, and by maintaining health; particular caution is desirable against poisoning by alcohol, lead, syphilis, which often so damage the germ cells that their effects last over many generations. Even though some undesirable failing exist in one's family, and it be of a hereditary nature, there is no good cause for worry; one should be careful, but not full of care. By the same methods, namely, by suitable mating, by maintaining good health, and by wise supervision of the offspring, the deficiency can, in most cases, be kept abeyant.

To illustrate the main points of our essay, let us take up, briefly, the histories of two families, the one noted for its degeneracy, the other for the opposite.

Doubtless we have all heard of the Jukes, a family originally of New York, but now scattered throughout the United States and Canada. The founder of the family was a Max Juke, who was born in New York in 1720 (of course, the name Juke is fictitious). Max was a lazy, good-for-nothing person, apparently feeble-

minded. Of almost three thousand descendants very few were self-supporting or good citizens. Most were drunkards, paupers, vagabonds, criminals, harlots, epileptics, idiots, insane; hundreds died in infancy; hundreds were cripples, victims of syphilis and of other serious diseases. It is estimated that this family cost the State more than three million dollars in caring for them.

This family is often compared with that of Richard Edwards, of Connecticut, a man well-endowed mentally and physically. His wife, Elizabeth Tuttle, whom he married in 1691, was also noted for her physical charms and her intellect. Of about fourteen hundred descendants of the union, not one was ever convicted of crime; indeed, the wealth this family has added to the nation is incalculable. The majority were distinguished in various walks of life—as lawyers, physicians, clergymen, educators, state governors, mayors of cities, business men, Supreme Court Justices, college presidents. Three were Congressmen, two were United States Senators, one was a Vice-President.

A cursory study of these two families might cause one to conclude that it is futile to battle against heredity, that a bad heredity will only increase in badness, and a good heredity in-

crease in worth. But if we examine the facts a little more closely we are likely to modify our viewpoint.

If we investigate the Jukes, for instance, we shall find such important points as these: That one of Max Juke's sons married a harlot who had out of wedlock a syphilitic son; the latter married a cousin by whom he had eight syphilitic children. We shall discover that marriage into degenerate families was the rule, that intermarriage was frequent, that the already tainted germ cells were further damaged by alcoholic and syphilitic poisons, that the environment was very poor, that good home example and home training were practically nil, and so on. The few Jukes who were peaceable and without serious taint were almost invariably those who left the original habitat and married into stocks stronger than their own.

If we examine the Edwards we shall find that even this family was not without blemish, a fact which some exponents of eugenics fail to mention. Elizabeth Tuttle Edwards was divorced by her husband because of her adultery and other immoralities. Dr. Davenport writes in his *Heredity in Relation to Eugenics:* "The evil taint was in the blood, for one of her sisters murdered her own son, and a brother murdered his

own sister." (The Edwards owed much to this woman, apparently; after his divorce Mr. Edwards married a Mary Talcott, by whom he had five sons and a daughter; none of them, nor their descendants, rose above mediocrity.) The Edwards, however, had the advantages of good training, education, and environment; they made no alliances with degenerates; they did not bathe their germ cells in alcohol or syphilis; they made themselves worthy of acceptance into good families; consequently, the original flaw was kept in the background, and their story is what it is. Had they disregarded all these things, their history would not differ materially from that of the Jukes; theirs, too, would be a sorry tale.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FEAR OF MATERNAL IMPRESSIONS

So-called Marked Children—Theories for—The Arguments Against—"Animal Children"—Illustrative Cases—The Illegitimate Child—Conscious Control of the Unborn—Why the Belief is Widespread

1

Of all credulities, there is probably none which has a firmer hold upon people of all degrees of intelligence than maternal impressions, by which is meant the alleged susceptibility of an unborn child to the mental states of its mother. Just where the belief originated, no one knows. Evidences of it can be located in the Bible (Gen. 30:37-43); also, in the Laws of Lycurgus which commanded all Spartan wives to look only on such pictures and statues as exemplified the strong and the beautiful, so that their children would be strong and beautiful. Ancient physicians unhesitatingly endorsed it and gave many illustrations; in fact, up to the time of Blondel, who in the ealy 1700's wrote a book challenging it, few dared to oppose it. Even Darwin sup-

ported it. Literary men of every age have found it very useful. Sterne employs it in *Tristram Shandy;* Sir Walter Scott, in *The Fortunes of Nigel;* Oliver Wendel Holmes, in *Elsie Venner;* Nathaniel Hawthorne, in *The Birthmark.* Today it appears affirmatively from time to time in the "movies," in fiction, and in works by supposed scientists.

The theory of maternal impressions is so extensive that a short definition is difficult. However, it contends that an unborn child may be, and often is, "marked" in a specific manner corresponding to something the mother has experienced during pregnancy, even before pregnancy; this excludes blemishes present at birth but not credited to mental influences. It is not deemed necessary that the child be in mind at the time the "marking" occurs; such may take place during a forgotten dream. Unpleasant experiences, including thoughts, are said to operate much more often than the pleasant. There are some persons who teach that if the mother scratches herself, or longs unavailingly for a certain food or thing, a symbolic sign will be shown on the child when born. Some think, too, with Macnish, that if the mother is irritable or otherwise emotionally disturbed while pregnant, the child will display that disposition;

the constitutional timidity of James VI and his fear of a drawn sword are ascribed to his mother's actions when Rizzio was murdered. Again, it is alleged that the mother can, by power of thought, mold the child in any desired way. For instance, if the mother wishes her unborn child to be a beautiful opera singer, all she needs do is to keep this thought constantly in mind, and sing often; it does not matter that the mother has a very poor voice, that she knows nothing of music. If her husband wishes and sings too, results are more certain.

2

Were we to ask the exponents of the theory to explain the *modus operandi* of maternal impressions, it would be found that they use a *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* form of reasoning. They would refer us to "cases," most of which can not be investigated owing to their age, or to the fact that they are of a hearsay nature. Some of the cases they would emphasize because they are to be located in books written by clergymen, sociologists, physicians, but even here no explanation is offered. Of course, no thinking person is led astray because one "learned" man endorses a belief; it is the conclusions of the majority of scientists that are nearer truth. And

unless one possesses a thorough knowledge of biology, heredity, physiology, pathology, and related sciences, one's endorsement of maternal impressions is not at all authoritative.

If hard pressed for an explanation, some might fall back on Darwin's theory of pangenesis. This theory assumes that every part of the adult organism gives off minute units or gemmules which accumulate in the germ cells; when the latter develop, these units give rise to cells or parts like those from which they came. According to this conception, thoughts or mental impressions might, in some way, influence the spermatozoa and ova, and affect the development of the child. This theory is rejected, in every respect, by the scientific world, and, having absolutely no proof or endorsement, may be dismissed.

Others might call in telepathy. There are eminent men who accept telepathy, but faith alone does not make truth, else all the isms in the world, even opposing isms, are facts. At present telepathy is only a hypothesis, not a universally accredited scientific dogma. As for the stage performances of "mind reading" and the like, which have great weight with many persons, these can be duplicated by perfectly understandable means. Even if telepathy were

tenable, it fails to account for the alleged cases of "marking" which took place before conception; again, since telepathy is said to operate between mind and mind, it does not solve the defects which were credited to a very early period of pregnancy, before the embryonic nervous system had developed. There is really no more reason for considering that a telepathic connection exists between mother and fetus than there is for believing that one obtains between mother and nursing child. The fetus is practically outside the mother's body; it is contained in a pouch (the womb), and is attached to this pouch by a cord through which it receives nourishment. It is, therefore, capable of being affected only by mechanical conditions, and by the blood stream. Even the blood does not pass directly to the child; it is first deposited in the honeycomb-like, placental blood spaces, wherein a selective action is exercised by the placental cells—that is, certain substances which are useful are passed on to the fetus, and others which are harmful, or unsuitable, are rejected. Poor blood may, it is true, have a detrimental effect on the general development of the fetus, but inasmuch as the blood does not carry ideas, it can not specifically mark a child in accordance with certain ideas.

By comparing maternal impressions to certain peculiar conditions which are occasionally noted in nervous subjects, chiefly females, the advocates of the theory might offer us an argument worthy of attention. For instance, some religious persons who had spent much time in meditaking upon the passion and death of Christ, had what appeared to be drops of blood ooze from the palms of their hands, the soles of their feet, from their left sides, and from their foreheads. Carter has noted the case of a lady who saw a heavy window fall upon, and cut off, three fingers of a child's hand; shortly after the accident, the three corresponding fingers of her hand became swollen and inflamed. Hack Tuke tells of a lady who saw a child come out of an iron gate; it seemed to her that the gate would close with such force as to crush the child's ankle; this did not happen, yet simultaneously with her fear she felt a pain in her ankle, and, on taking off her stocking, discovered a red circle there. Richet mentions a mother who saw her child accidentally unfasten the catch of a heavy sliding door, thereby endangering itself of being guillotined. There formed on the mother's neck a red wheal which remained for hours.

Occurrences like these impress the average person very much; they are regarded as very

mysterious, if not supernatural. They are rare, probably abnormal, but not above understanding; analogous effects can be produced in laboratory animals. The effects produced were, however, due to ideas; they were such as are not under the domain of the will; and there was no desire that they occur; a somewhat similar chain of circumstances is supposed to obtain in the process of marking a child. But in order for these phenomena to take place, it is necessary that the nerves to the parts concerned be intact and continuous; if the nerves are absent at any point, no amount of conscious or unconscious thought can modify the parts in the least. Mother and child have no nervous union. The womb has nerves, but these do not touch the child at all. Between the womb and the child there is a tough membrane, devoid of nerves, and having considerable fluid; even the cord which attaches the child to the womb has no nerves. And so far no physiologist has been able to show that a nerve impulse can jump over a gap in the continuity of a nerve. There are, of course, other objections to any assumed correlation between maternal impressions and such results of suggestion as mentioned above.[1]

[1] We might mention here Gafforel's two interesting cases of birthmarks: A girl had on her skin a small mulberry mark; each year, during the mulberry season, the mark

3

On the other hand, those who reject the theory have a vast amount of negative evidence to support them. Bischoff, in 11,000 births, could not find one instance of a maternal impression. The statistics of earthquake districts are also unfavorable to the doctrine; for example, Pestalozzi and Resnevic delivered sixty women who had undergone all the terrors of an Italian earthquake; many of the women had been buried under the ruins for hours, yet, barring three miscarriages, all gave birth to living, well-formed babies. Insane women, who often think that they are being poisoned, that the devil is after them, etc., bear children who show no signs rep-

swelled, became red, and itched. Another girl had a mark said to resemble a fish; whenever she ate fish the mark pained her. The swelling during the mulberry season, and the pain on eating fish, would apparently give absolute proof of actual marking, but to one familiar with the powers of suggestion they mean little. In each case the individual, doubtless, knew the cause assigned for the blemish, and it is not peculiar, therefore, that the sight of mulberries on the one hand, and the eating of fish on the other produce the effects noted. The ramifications of suggestion are very extensive and account for any number of things which to the imaginative are of a supernormal order. The following example, though not pertinent to our theme, may not be without value:

A man had his leg amputated. Being religious, he had the leg buried in a cemetery. For a long time he complained of pain, apparently coming from the amputated limb. He finally concluded that the leg had been carelessly interred, and that this was producing his pain. He had it dug up, in his presence, and found, he said, that the leg had been placed crosswise rather than straight. He reinterred it, in a manner satisfactory to himself, whereupon the pain disappeared.

resentative of the delusions. It is noteworthy, too, that anomalies of development, practically identical with human abnormalities occur in the animal and vegetable kingdom—in cows, sheep, horses, bears, birds, reptiles, insects, even in fishes and frogs whose cells are fertilized outside the mother's body. Nor is it rare to see potatoes, tomatoes, and other common garden products with various peculiarities, yet no one tries to explain them by maternal impressions; only recently the writer saw an apple and a potato which bore some resemblances to a human face; there has been brought to his notice, also, an ear of white corn which contained a number of red kernels arranged in the form of a cross. Again, there take place any number of developmental faults of internal parts of the body with which the parent is unacquainted, and faults so peculiar that he or she would be at a loss to account for them, by a maternal impression or otherwise. Experimental efforts to substantiate the theory have failed; for instance, pregnant cattle have been exposed to certain colors throughout pregnancy, but the colors of the offspring were not affected. The writer knows of ten or more pregnant women who, for unavoidable reasons, were, for months, in the same ward with a deformed, noisy idiot; all of them had perfectly normal babies.

Apart from disproving the arguments offered by the believers in maternal impressions, and apart from presenting the negative side of the question, there is another way by which the matter may be approached. This is by analyzing the examples given as proof. We may be able to cover more ground by briefly taking up these illustrations in groups rather than singly.

4

Animals have played a large part in human history. In early days they were credited with divine and demoniacal powers. Good and evil spirits, especially the devil, witches, those who had "the evil eyes," were said to take on, at times, the shapes of horses, dogs, hyenas, leopards, goats, birds, reptiles, wolves. In old histories one learns that they had wondrous gifts, such as the ability to see great distances, to talk to the gods, to read one's mind, to place a curse upon one, especially upon one's offspring. In the Middle Ages animals were tried for various offenses, and the findings of the court were read to them; they were, too, given the status of witnesses in the trials of human beings. In the same period there were many epidemics of mewing, barking, roaring; and criminals often dressed in animal skins so as to terrorize those

they wished to assault or rob. Again, markedly blemished children were considered the result of sexual intercourse between devils and humans, or between animals and humans. The condition of the insane, the epileptic, the feeble-minded, of those suffering from hydrophobia, was ascribed to possession by animals. As alluded to in our fairy stories, good and evil persons were often changed into animals. Other tales tell of children who were reared by, and who resembled, wolves, oxen, bears.

Doubtless, each of us has heard some or all of these facts; we may know of others. And it is probably because of the unpleasantness they have left in the recesses of our minds that we are so prone to blame animals for marked children. At any rate, children said to have been influenced by, and to resemble, various animals are more or less common, particularly in institutions for mental defectives.

If we inquire into the mentality of "animal children" we shall find that the majority of them are idiots or imbeciles. Their brains have failed to develop normally; there is often associated with this a failure of physical development, so that marked physical deformities exist. The cause of the developmental failure can be traced to serious maternal illness during preg-

nancy, injury to the child, and to other scientific reasons. Now, it is characteristic of these unfortunates to betray mannerisms which, to the imaginative, are animal-like. Thus, some idiots and imbeciles are unable to walk, but crawl on all fours; others can not talk, but shriek, bellow, make weird noises; some eat anything, even garbage and rags; some are constantly grimacing, rocking to and fro, or from side to side. They do these things because they have little or no intelligence, not because an animal has marked them; indeed, the accused animal usually shows more brain power than they do. The writer has investigated hundreds of defective children said to have been marked by animals and by other things, but in not one instance has he been able to prove that the assigned cause was the true one.

Often "animal children" have good intelligence. Some, for example, are bright, but possess webbed fingers or toes, alleged to have been caused by a bat or a duck. This condition is hereditary, and, like many other hereditary defects, it may skip a generation and so be forgotten as existing in the family line. Others have harelips or cleft palates, attributed to marking by a hare or a rabbit. Harelip is regarded by some biologists as an atavistic trait,

since some of the lower animals have it naturally. It is best to look upon it as a failure of development; the same condition is often found in creatures that have never seen a hare or a rabbit. Again, some children have a generalized or localized abnormal growth of hair, credited to maternal fright caused by monkeys, bears, dogs, rats. The real causes of the overgrowth are many; in some cases the overgrowth is merely a persistence and further development of the hair which normally covers the child during a period of intrauterine life; in others it is due to ductless gland perversions. Sometimes it is a familial trait. Jewtijew, the "Dog-Faced Man," had a son like himself; and a son by a former marriage showed similar characteristics. In many instances, the localized growths of hair are only large, pigmented, hairy moles.

5

Frequently, cited are the cases like these: A woman was much worried during her pregnancy because her daughter had her ears bored for earrings; when her child was born it showed what were apparently apertures for earrings. A baker's wife, during the early months of her pregnancy, waited upon a little girl who came in daily for a bun; she noted that the girl had

an extra thumb; when her child was born she was not surprised to find that it had an extra thumb. Another lady saw, three months before her pregnancy, the bodies of two children laid out side by side; her child was born with two heads.

The true reasons for these abnormalities can be discovered by anyone who will investigate them. The apertures in the ears were undoubtedly of a hereditary nature; there are many recorded family charts which show the probable truth of this; the present writer has encountered a family in which the defect was present in the females only, and passed on by them to their daughters: one of the women who did not have the apertures, gave birth to a girl who did. An excessive number of fingers and toes is also a hereditary condition. Bicephalus, or the presence of two heads, may or may not be hereditary, but in any case it is not peculiar to humans; it can be found in reptiles, sheep, chickens, among others. Certainly, the time at which the latter defect was said to have occurred should be sufficient to rule out a maternal impression.

It is not only things seen by the expectant mother that have been charged with marking children, but also things actually suffered by her. For example, a lady had her left hand

painfully grasped by her husband; when her child was born, parts of the first and second fingers of the left hand were missing. Here again heredity is the true explanation. Needless to state, scientists not only deny the validity of birthmarks in causing bodily modifications, but they deny that experiences one undergoes, or characters one acquires, are transmitted even by the germ cells in a hereditary manner. A few scientists admit the possibility of an acquired character being transmitted by heredity under rare conditions; but so far thorough search has failed to give adequate proof of this. A little thought should be sufficient to show that it is very infrequent, to say the least. Though the Chinese have for hundreds of years artificially kept their feet small, their children are born with normal feet which grow to the average size if permitted. Weismann could not produce a tail-less species of mice by cutting off the tails of new-born mice over many generations. The dehornation of cattle, the docking of horses' tails, the cutting of dogs' tails, even when the animals are pregnant, do not affect the horns and tails of their offsprings. The children of paralytics, of the blind and deaf, of the dumb, on a non-hereditary basis, do not have the parental deficiencies. Numerous women undergo operations

while pregnant, many have skin diseases, yet bear children who are normal.

6

Of the many beliefs centered about the illegitimate child there are two which we shall notice here. One is that the illegitimate tends to have some crass physical or mental defect, as blindness or imbecility, either as a token of God's wrath, or as a result of the emotional stress which the unwedded mother experiences during her pregnancy. The second, and opposing, belief is that the illegitimate inherits only the better qualities of its procreators; it is, therefore, likely to be well-endowed physically and mentally. No satisfactory reason is assigned for the latter, save the mysterious action of the intense love which supposedly prompted the child. As a matter of fact, it is sensuality alone and not true love which is behind the vast majority of illegitimate children.

If, as is the case, some illegitimates are born blemished, and if in adult life they betray character abnormalities, the cause is not hard to understand. It is now well known that the mothers of many illegitimates are feeble-minded; and many of the mothers have venereal disease. Since feeble-mindedness is a recessive trait, the

children of mentally defective mothers are due to be normal, provided that the fathers have sound nervous systems. But it happens that the fathers are sometimes epileptic, psychopathic, or otherwise unstable on a hereditary basis; and because the children receive a double inheritance of defect, abnormality can only be expected. If the mother has active venereal disease, it follows that, unless precautions are taken, the child will become blind, or suffer other effects of the disease. Under the same conditions the same results would occur, whether the parents were saints, whether the child was born in wedlock or not. The punishment is that of nature, not of God.

Not all illegitimates are abnormal, nor are their mothers any more steeped in shame than are the fathers. In fact, the larger proportion are perfectly sound; the illegitimacy factor alone should not dissuade one from adopting one of these children. But even though at the time of conception the child receives good hereditary traits, the latter do not have many advantages. The mother is often of the poorer classes, is forced to work for a living, to undergo mental strain, to receive care inadequate for one in her condition. How serious this is, is shown by the fact that the majority of illegitimate

children at birth weigh considerably less than the average, and that their death rate during the first year is three times greater than among legitimates. After its birth the child's lot is none too happy. The mother may or may not care for it; her relatives certainly do not, and waste little love upon it. If it is not sent to a home, it is annoyed and taunted by the neighborhood children, is socially ostracized, practically compelled to associate with undesirables. A poor environment can greatly injure a good heredity, and it is rarely that a good heredity can reveal itself when placed in a bad environment constantly, especially in the formative years. It is no wonder, then, that the uncared-for illegitimate sometimes becomes an enemy of society, and if mental conflicts due to parentage and other causes generate character abnormalities. The abnormalities are not inherited, however; it is not a case of "Blood will tell," but merely a demonstration of the lack of proper care. When the child is reared in an institution it does not fare so well as the legitimate who receives the benefits of a real home. It necessarily is given group training; its individuality, its personal problems gain comparatively little attention. When able to support itself, it is thrown upon the world to shift for itself; it has had few

advantages, has not known the love of fond parents. Hence, its future course is likely to be stormy, and less propitious than that of the legitimate.

It will be agreed that some illegitimates are comely, and that some of them are brilliant. An equal, if not a larger number, are at the opposite pole; and the majority possess, at the most, no more than average qualities. There is utterly no sound reason why they should inherit desirable features only. Like children born in wedlock, their make-up depends upon the cells which go to form them. If these cells carry good traits, if the mother has good care during pregnancy, if the child is properly trained, the illegitimate tends to become a useful and a healthy citizen; if not, he tends to become an undesirable. It is, to repeat, natural laws which operate, and these act regardless of the benefit of clergy.

7

As for those who maintain that by concentration or will-power it is possible to make an unborn child an Adonis, a Helen, or a prodigy of one kind or another:

We must insist that the physical and mental characteristics of a child are determined by the

traits contained in the parental cells which have combined to form it. By wise mating the mother may be able to give the child a good combination of traits, and by caring for her own health during pregnancy; and by properly training the child after birth, she may cause these traits to reveal themselves. But otherwise she has no influence upon them; the traits are matters of heredity, and can not be added to or altered in the least; consequently, will-power is impotent in so far as they are concerned. No one who has not a dollar can give a dollar away; and no parents who have not the hereditary traits which control special gifts can give them to their children.

No doubt there are occasional instances where such control is apparently proved. But in these cases one must take into consideration, among other things, the suggestions and training which the child has received from the mother. Again, every person has latent abilities which need only development in order to appear; many ignorant men, as we judge ignorance, have children who are geniuses. It is not surprising, therefore, if at times a child should turn out as the parents desired.

Practical illustrations should be sufficient to disprove the soundness of this belief. If the

theory were true, sex regulation would be easy, but we all must know of parents who constantly wished for a boy, who even decorated their rooms in expectation of one, who bought boy's playthings, yet who were disappointed. And if our mothers' wishes could effect it, we would all be great persons; there would be no criminals, no poverty, no suffering of any kind, yet how many a fond mother's hopes are daily blasted, or never realized.

8

On and on, were it not tedious, we might offer objections to the theory of maternal impressions. But it may be accepted as a truism that the doctrine has absolutely no scientific backing, and that all such examples as are advanced in favor of it can, when investigation is possible, be disproved, and traced to facts which are perfectly natural and understandable.

Inasmuch as the theory is rejected by all scientists worthy of the name, and has been discredited for many years, one may wonder why it continues to flourish, even among people who should know better. Many answers might be given; for instance, the slowness with which old beliefs die out; the universal love of the mys-

terious and the dramatic; the parental instinct which fears everything which may, in any way, damage the offspring; the preference for easy explanations, though these do not explain; the unwillingness to expend the labor necessary to comprehend the facts. But a deeper reason is found in man's search for happiness, his wish to think well of himself and to be thought well of by his neighbors. Among other things requisite for man's happiness it is necessary that his children be, at the very least, the equals of the children in the community. Should his offsprings be markedly blemished, his expectations and his pride receive a severe blow; in place of joy there come sorrow, anger, hate, which, at times, are visited upon the unfortunates who unwittingly serve as reminders of thwarted desires. Again, man feels, if unconsciously, that he may be deficient in his make-up, and therefore, that he is responsible for the condition of the children; he realizes, too, that his neighbors may believe the same, with a consequent diminution in their regard for him. To escape these unhappy thoughts, to checkmate personal responsibility and public disapprobation, man is eager to find some cause outside of himself. In the theory of birthmarks he has a cause; and a cause which is accepted as unavoidable by his neighbors who,

knowing the possibility that a defective child may be born to them, are inclined to be lenient.

Whatever the explanation, it is apparent to all unbiased students of the subject that the theory needs to be combated vigorously. Because of it thousands of mothers go through their pregnancies torn by the fear that their expected ones will be seriously blemished; thousands are meticulously careful to observe all the inane things which busybodies tell them they should do before, during, and after pregnancy; thousands refuse to undergo necessary dental and surgical care. There is absolutely no call for all this slavery to archaic untruth; the number of defective children is comparatively small, and never is a maternal impression accountable for them. As for those who seem to take a fiendish delight in disseminating tales of marked children, especially those who worry the expectant mother in this fashion, one often wishes that there were some statute whereby they might be impounded as malicious mischief-makers.

CHAPTER XIV

THE FEAR HABIT

Worry—Physical Aids to Cure—Nervous Habits—Equanimity of Spirit—Hobbies—One Day at a Time

1

In contrast to the persons whose fears are more or less intense, paroxysmal, and confined in one direction, there are others who are chronically anxious and beset by one petty fear after another. Sometimes they are concerned about events of the past, but usually their anxieties are directed to future possibilities. They see only the dark side of things; they are constantly on the lookout for trouble. The arrival of a telegram, for instance, is taken to indicate that a relative has died; a cold ushers in ideas of tuberculosis; the tardiness of the children in coming home from school is a sure sign that they have met with misfortune; a cross word, the slightest neglect from the husband means that love has been transferred to another bosom; a lull

in business brings visions of the poorhouse; the accidents read or heard about will surely be theirs. Indeed, the fearful expectations of this group are endless.

The persons referred to are usually called worriers; and worry and fear grow on the same bush. Their number runs into millions. While some of them are robust physically, the majority are frail and complain of many physical ailments, chiefly insomnia, indigestion, constipation. They are, also, very emotional, and betray many nervous habits, as tremblings, grimaces, jerkiness in movement, high-pitched voices, contracted foreheads, muscular tensions. Their physical and mental state is not difficult to understand when we bear in mind that unpleasant affective states interfere with orderly physical performances, and that dammed-up emotion is always striving to find an outlet through the nervous pathways.

Much has been written about worry and its cure. According to some schools of "thought," the remedy is comparatively simple. One needs but laugh, be an optimist, practice Pollyannaism, repeat such expressions as "I should worry," keep a liberal supply of cheer-up mottoes on one's desk, or in one's room. Such suggestions may be of some value when one is tempor-

arily down-in-the-mouth, out-of-sorts, blue, but they will not prove to be very consoling nor effective when one's unrest is more deep-seated. It is very easy for a person liberally supplied with the world's goods to say, "Money isn't everything," "The Lord will provide," but it takes more than platitudes and homilies to solace, say, the man who is out of a position, and who has a wife and children to support. Again, this "hokum" is detrimental, indeed, if it leads people to make no effort to help themselves, if it treats all worriers alike, and ignores the fact that worry may have as a basis a definite disorder which, if neglected, may prove serious.

Were the cause of worry always the same its eradication would be a simple matter. But it has a great many sources. Physical errors are not often incitants; when present they are, as a rule, effects of the worry. However, it is best not to lose sight of the fact that visual defects, nasal troubles, relaxed abdomen, ductless gland perversions, infected teeth and gums, and other impairments may be directly responsible for one's emotional imbalance. At times, worry is traceable to, or aggravated by, excessive smoking, indulgence in tea or coffee, insufficient exercise, improper living habits, in which case a correction of the error will bring about a cure or

an amelioration. More often, the fret is the offspring of home discord, dissatisfaction, frustrated desires, secret sorrows, buried anxieties and conflicts of one kind or another. It is the latter cases which tend to be invulnerable or but temporarily amenable to the usual methods of treatment, for cure demands a discovery of the mental thorn and its removal, plus such re-educative therapy as the individual requires.

Though many different causes operate in generating worry, there are many instances where no serious or hidden physical or mental disturbance is responsible for it. Just as habits of thought will account for many cases of worry confined to the body, so will they explain many cases of worry directed elsewhere. One has a temperament disposed to pessimism, or to anticipate difficulties; no measures intended to correct this tendency have been employed. Or one has undergone a period of mental or physical stress, during which emotional balance was disturbed. The ideas then entertained were so gloomy, so intense, and so prolonged that they have become fixed thought habits, and continue to rule the personality. This fact suggests the appropriateness of devices designed to help one to regain mastery over the thoughts, over the will. It is with such that we shall be concerned

here, though we do not pretend to have discovered any certain and generally applicable method by which this may be effected. In fact, we prefer that our suggestions be employed as adjuncts to one's physician's instructions.

2

Since most worriers tend to be unduly solicitous about their somatic welfare, it is advisable that they apply the admonitions given in Chapter VI. The rules of personal hygiene should be observed, not because they are curative, but because they are good in themselves. If we were to call attention to any particular rule of right living, we should emphasize physical exercise, especially if the worrier is a middle-aged business man, clergyman, teacher, office worker. These persons are particularly likely to suffer from the effects of a shut-in existence, and are often greatly benefited, and sometimes cured of their worry, as well as of their physical discomforts, by such exercises as walking to work, sawing wood, indoor and outdoor rowing, swinging-ring gymnastics.

So-called nerve tonics, nerve foods, often recommended in the press for worry, are not to be employed; in short, no medicines of any kind should be taken unless the physician so

advises. As a rule, medicines are unnecessary and unhelpful, for as in "nervousness" in general, the nerves are not at fault; the trouble is with one's way of thinking, and neither foods nor medicines can, in themselves, change a pessimist into an optimist nor replace fear by courage. Not infrequently medicinal "tonics" do more harm than good, especially when they contain stimulating drugs.

So many worriers dread insanity that it may be well to emphasize the groundlessness of this fear. One's friends may say that So and So went insane through worry, but we may rest assured that they are mistaken. Worry may be painful, and it may, if unchecked and intense, cause so-called nervous breakdown, but it does not produce insanity. Providing proper treatment is instituted, the worrier has every reason to expect a return to mental health.

3

As before stated, worriers betray many nervous habits. Their bodies are always tense. They clear their throats and cough unnecessarily and frequently; they carry their hands clenched; they sit stiffly on the edges of chairs; they walk with short, jerky strides. These mannerisms are, of course, reflections of tense

states of mind; and while they may afford an outlet for emotion, they also serve to increase emotion. They do this in many ways; for instance, disturbing stimuli from the tense physical areas are transmitted to the brain, irritating it unduly; again, the wasteful expenditure of physical energy associated with tension gives rise to chronic fatigue, with which emotional instability is to be expected.

It is advisable, therefore, that the worrier undertake the correction of his neurotic habits. First of all, it would be well to take an inventory of them; this a person may do by himself or with the aid of a friendly and less biased critic. One habit may be singled out for correction at a time, say coughing. Any person who has this habit and who pays attention to it will be surprised at the number of times he coughs needlessly; and the mere noting of it will aid him to restrain it. Of course, the conquest of any habit will not be effected at once; even when apparently routed it will recur, but by persistence victory can be won, and with one habit broken he is encouraged to conquer the others.

It is desirable, also, that exercises in relaxation be practiced. He might, for example, learn to speak quietly, through open teeth, with a

lower tone, and with attention to enunciation. In walking, he might take plenty of time, take reasonably long steps, and carry the hands loosely at the sides, or lightly grasping his cane or parcel. Exercises which have as their aim the correction of faulty posture, and deep breathing exercises, morning and night, are very useful. For general purposes the following exercise may be utilized:

Sit comfortably in an easy chair, or recline upon a couch or bed. Let go of all the muscles, as if you were a dead weight. Then, with eyes closed, say mentally, "My hands are relaxed and heavy," "My arms are relaxed and heavy," "My feet are relaxed and heavy," "My legs are relaxed and heavy," "My head is relaxed and heavy," "My eyelids are relaxed and heavy." This exercise is very valuable after lunch, and after going to bed at night; when properly performed it often induces sleep. A siesta after lunch, or later in the day, is beneficial for most worriers, as well as for those who work under mental strain, and those past middle life. It is no longer considered harmful to sleep after a light meal.

Serviceable as a relaxing measure and as an aborter of nervous excitement is the neutral bath—that is, the bath water has a temperature

of about 100 degrees. One may remain in the bath for fifteen minutes or longer, even for an hour or two. Before going to bed is a very good time for it; one may also make use of it whenever tension or excitement is marked.

A great foe of relaxation and poise is hurry. The hurry habit is common among worriers, who not only hurry in their work but also in their walk, their talk, their play, exercise, and meals. Hurry is a form of fear. While we sometimes hurry, in a pleasant state of mind, so that we may the sooner engage in something agreeable, the habitual hurrier is always fretful and impatient, and hurries because he fears that he may not have time to do this or that, or because he may be late and so on; again, the facial expression and actions which accompany hurry are similar to those that accompany fear. Hurry is rarely necessary; and it certainly does not add to one's peace of mind nor to one's efficiency and health. For those given to hurry, it is best that they take plenty of time for every action, force themselves to be slow; thereby they will gain the happy medium, and find that they not only accomplish as much, but, also, that they perform their tasks better, with less anxiety, and with less wear and tear upon their nervous and physical strength.

4

In addition to physical measures, relief of tension may be sought, and more directly, by way of the mind itself. Very effective in this connection is religion, especially daily prayer which has always afforded a satisfactory outlet for pent-up emotions. Goethe tells us that he never resorted to prayer in times of trial without finding relief. And it might be said that the modern so-called cathartic cure of nervous ills, which consists in the patient's unburdening his mind to the physician, is essentially but another form of the prayer cure. To be really helpful it is necessary that the one who prays have faith and trust, and that one pray from the heart, unloosing its hopes, its sorrows, and all such things as hang heavy upon it, rather than pray according to fixed formulas.

In the writings of Confucius, Marcus Aurelius, Seneca, Epictetus, Cicero, Lucretius, or of such moderns as Charles Wagner, David Grayson, among others, one may find many suggestions which will aid in building up a philosophy potent enough to adjust one to the vicissitudes of existence. Many persons make scrap books of poems and quotations which seem to be particularly adapted to their needs, and to which

they resort daily, or at times when the spirit fluctuates. Their example is commendable.

As a further aid to equanimity, the worrier might be more charitable, less critical of himself and of others. Many worriers, especially women, are prone to find fault with all existing things; they are too refined, too idealistic, too much in search of perfection, too impatient at trifles. The dress, talk, and manners of others annoy them; they expect as much of the uncultured as they do of the cultured. They are very easily disgusted, so much so at times that they try to escape the performance of excretory and marital duties. They can not tolerate nor excuse a speck of dirt, a soiled spot on the linen, an error of grammar, a slight breach of etiquette, a popular song—indeed, their sensitive and esthetic natures know no confines. Many of them, also, though they might deny it, are controlled by envy, hate, bitterness, jealousy, pride, dissatisfaction and other undesirable mental habits which destroy their better selves and grant them no peace.

The remedy is charity, kindliness, understanding, forgiveness, an impersonal outlook on men and things. Perfection can never be found in this world; there is not even a perfect idiot, and he who seeks perfection is sure to fail la-

mentably in the quest—not only this, but to become embittered, intolerant, seclusive, friendless. It is best to face the facts, realize that he asks too much, that the faults that annoy him are not so much in the world and its creatures as within himself. And if to a broad view of life he brings a friendly spirit, avoids all looks, words, and acts that might cause pain, routs all temptations to criticize, to be impatient and envious, and strives always to be of service to his fellows, his cup of content is likely to be filled to overflowing.

In the promotion of satisfaction there is nothing too insignificant for consideration. Thus, flowers on your desk, or in your rooms; a cheerful countenance, cheerful conversations; singing at your tasks, if permissible, all aid markedly in generating a pleasant state of mind. The same can be said of cheerful living rooms and pictures. Several writers have referred to the nerve-irritating qualities of certain wall-papers, especially wall papers colored red; we do not stress this point, though we do advise that the papers be subdued, preferably buff, blue, or olive green, particularly in the sleeping room. There is some psychological value in changing the wall papers more often than is now the custom, as

well as in occasional alterations in the arrangement of the rooms' furniture.

5

Worriers are very self-centered, even though their worries seem to be purely altruistic. And it is because excessive attention has been focused on themselves that they complain of numerous physical ills; that they are so self-conscious; that their worries increase and multiply, and become more gigantic and tenacious. As someone has said, worries are like babies; they grow fatter the more they are nursed. And, as Kingsley reminds us, if we wish to be miserable, all we need do is think about ourselves.

It is necessary, therefore, that the worrier find some absorbing interest outside of himself; this takes the mind away from circular paths, sidetracks the worries, and permits them to atrophy from neglect.

What the interest is to be is a matter for each person to determine. There are few men who can not find in their usual occupations more enthusiasm than it now gives; there are few, also, who can not improve their working ability. It is said that work, particularly overwork causes worry, but as a rule it is an ignorance or a neglect of personal hygiene, minor physical de-

fects, worry itself, which give rise to the disorders attributed to work itself. But should you be unable to place your whole heart in your work, you might develop a compensatory labor, as a hobby; in fact, a hobby is recommended for all of us, for the vast majority of persons have too much leisure time and not enough stimulating interests to occupy it.

There are any number of hobbies from which you may make a selection. In general, you should choose a hobby which appeals to you, though it may be necessary to select one which is held in doubtful value; some people profess to have no interest in anything, and are averse to engaging in any suggested pursuit. We might commend a study of the flowers, out-of-doors preferably, bee-keeping, book-collecting, explorations with a camera, a study of insects, say with the aid of Henri Fabre. If the hobby has a useful purpose apart from the happy anticipation and the pleasure it brings, all the better; for example, a study of chemistry, literature, history, grammar, penmanship, elocution, music. Your education is never completed; there is no such thing as finishing an education, and there are few of us who can not profitably improve ourselves along one or more of these lines.

Women particularly are in need of some form of compensatory labor, for their tasks and their lives in general are inclined to be monotonous. And because they are women, and naturally suited for the work, they might find agreeable hobbies in social welfare endeavors, in church work, in visiting hospitals, orphanges, neighborhood invalids, and the like. A good prescription for those without children or whose children have grown up is the adoption of a child; the current ideas that child-adoption is too risky to be ventured is unsound, for if one selects with ordinary prudence and gives the child a proper up-bringing, the child is almost certain to prove a source of joy. The more real service you render in the philanthropical labor and the more direct the contact with the objects of your endeavors, the greater the meed of satisfaction to all parties concerned. The sitting on a board of trustees, hurried visits to institutions once a month, lectures on social evils to sewing circles or literary clubs may increase one's prestige, but they pay very small dividends in real happiness. You might remember also that in the work of doing good, monetary outlay is not essential; the kindly, encouraging spirit is of foremost importance and value.

6

Concern yourself with but today;
Woo it, and teach it to obey
Your will and wish. Since time began
Today has been the friend of man;
But in his blindness and his sorrow
He looks to yesterday and tomorrow.

—Anon.

In worry, future distressing possibilities are projected into the present and cause as much suffering as if they had come to pass. The habit of looking ahead is not in itself bad, nor to be discouraged absolutely; in fact, one who desires to make occupational progress, to have money in the bank, to own a home, to escape cold, hunger, pain, and other evils, should, and must, do so. And, as a rule, the one who looks ahead is the superior in citizenship and in intellect to one who trusts to luck, with never a thought of the morrow. However, the only forethought which is praiseworthy is that which aids you to map out a course of action suited to overcome or to lessen potential and probable dangers, which is not entirely fear-thought. A little concern now and then, combined with logical thinking, will not hurt anyone. The trouble with worriers is that they are controlled by fear; their morbid, hypertrophied imaginations and not their intel-

lects do the thinking; they make no plans to outwit the supposed or real difficulty. Again, their anticipations rarely square with the facts; and not only are their thoughts painful and unhelpful, but, also, they are detrimental to the physical and mental economy. It is well-known that those who worry have the least cause. And the experiences of worriers in every age amply prove that threatened evils miscarry, or, at least, are never as serious as one has believed. As Emerson puts it:

> Some of your griefs you have cured.
> And the sharpest you still have survived,
> But what torments of grief you endured
> From evils which never arrived.

To counteract the habit of unhappy anticipation, the worrier would do well to live one day at a time, with no thought of the past, and as little of the future as is within reason. He may gain help in doing so by impressing upon himself the truth that worry is not conducive to health or to the solution of problems, and by recalling this whenever worry tries to intrude. Sometimes it is a good plan to arrange each night the activities of the next day, endeavoring to have every part of the day occupied. To the assigned tasks you are to give your whole attention, the motto being One Thing at a Time. For

instance, if you are at the theater your mind should be focused on the stage, not partly on it and partly on the vagrant, worrisome ideas that come from time to time; certainly, little relief can be expected if, in moments of freedom from worry, you endeavor to recall what you had been brooding about, yet many do this, as if unhappy without their worries. For periods when you have "nothing to do in particular," you might meditate upon some useful and interesting topic, such as a thought from Penn's *Fruits of Solitude,* or from Hare's *Guesses At Truth.* When out walking, you might observe the persons who pass by, and try to recall their features, their dress; or, after the method of Robert Houdin, gaze for a moment into a store window and then note how many articles you can recall. If you prefer, you may, with the assistance of Ruskin's *Modern Painters,* learn to see more in nature than you do at present. These practices not only aid in routing worry and in strengthening the will, but they also strengthen your memory and your powers of observation.

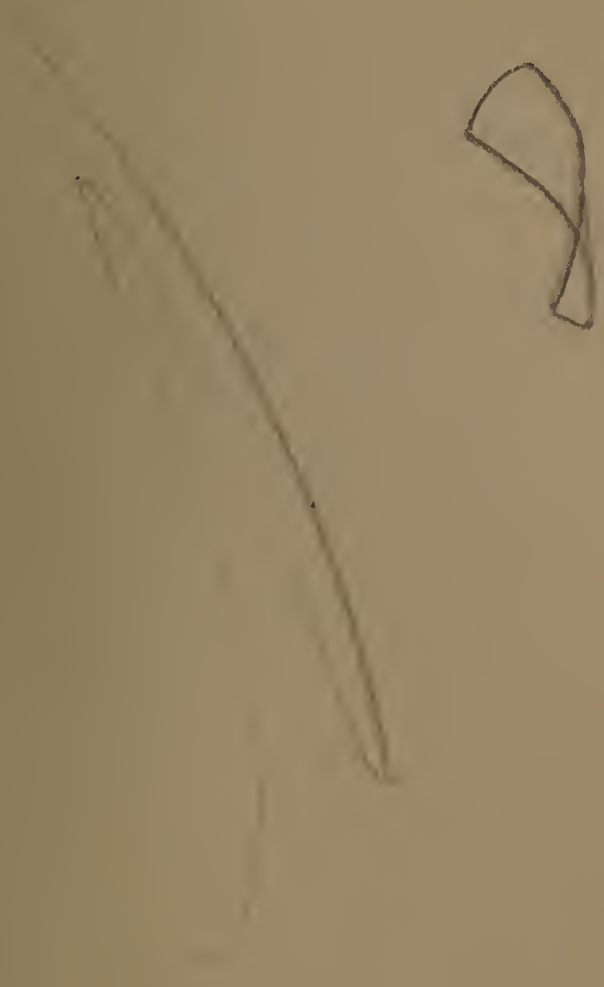
Should the worrier contend that it is impossible or too difficult for him to banish his fears for a whole day, he can, at least, keep the worries under control for short periods. And of all times it is best that they be ostracized during

meals, and after going to bed. Worry is no tonic to appetite, no friend of good digestion. It is Morpheus' greatest foe; indeed not only does it defeat sleep, but by depriving you of adequate rest it adds to fatigue and therefore to worry. It may be well to bear in mind, also, that the stillness of the night, and the absence of the distractions of the day, magnify worries, and make them more sinister.

A person might, then, cast out worry at these times. Repeated hammer-blows finally break the hardest rock, and in breaking the rock it is not the last blow which deserves credit, but all the blows, the first as well as the last. So with worry; persistent blows at it will conquer it, and every blow counts. It is best not to think "I won't worry," because this tends to suggest worry. Simply direct the thoughts to subjects that are not painful, and do so every time worries try to enter the mind. Many worriers insist that they can not check worry; but they can if they make the effort. Good intentions and the start are not enough; you must perservere, stick to the task, see the thing to a finish. Worry does not disappear of itself; again, even though one tackles it, it will not be floored in a day, any more than would a few efforts conquer a long-standing physical habit. Its mastery takes time

and patience; but if these are given, and especially if you have sought to discover and to remove any probable incitant of the worry, you are sure to win release, and with this peace, and the ability to direct the thoughts at will.

THE END



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